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TAUNTON THE BARNS, HANKRIDGE WAY, TA1 2LR	01823 444600
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WALSALL 35-37 BRIDGE ST, WS1 1DP	01922 709291
WOKINGHAM 43c PEACH ST, RG40 1XJ	01189 794242

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Digital recording has taken off in a big way, but in 2006 the market is going to explode. We can expect a barrage of new machines with more features, lower prices and better performance than ever.

More and more people will wake up to the delights of hard-disk recording, raising the demand for Sky+ style PVRs and DVD/HDD combis. And with the switch-over to digital TV looming on the horizon, the number of Freeview-equipped recorders on the market will increase dramatically too.

The choice is widening and there's a recorder to suit every need, but which one's for you? To help you decide, we're testing five different varieties of recorder that you can buy this Christmas.

Recording artists go large

DVD/hard-disk combis are represented by Pioneer's DVR-930H, the company's new flagship model. This recording powerhouse is loaded with hi-tech features (at $950, it should be) including HDMI output and a massive 400GB hard disk – we've got the UK's first review on page 48.

Next up is a Freeview Personal Video Recorder (PVR) in the shape of Humax's PVR-9200T. We love these hard-disk only recorders, especially when they boast twin tuners like this $240 machine does. Find out how it fares on page 52.

Add to this a DVD recorder/VCR combi from Toshiba, a fantastic Freeview-equipped deck from Panasonic and a $100 budget recorder from Funai and you've got all bases covered – whether you're new to the world of digital recording, or want to upgrade to something bigger and better. And we're even giving you a free Gigatain DVD-R to get you started!

Also inside this issue is an exclusive interview with the man in charge of Sony's flatpanel TVs, reports from Philips' top secret research centre and the CEDIA Expo in Indianapolis, plus a closely-fought 26in LCD TV group test and all the usual news and views from the world of home entertainment.

Enjoy the issue.

Danny Phillips
Editor

"With the switch-over to digital TV looming, the number of Freeview-equipped recorders on the market will increase dramatically"

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This month's First Look unveils the BBC's plans to broadcast hi-def in 2006 plus a 65in plasma from Panasonic and more new kit from Philips, ViewSonic and Sony

CEDIA report 24
Rob Lane takes a look at the cutting-edge kit unveiled at CEDIA Expo 2005 in Indianapolis – all the big names, all the new technology!

Sony on the spot 38
Steve May talks exclusively to Andreas Ditter, the man behind Sony's awesome new flatpanel TVs

On Test 47
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Liquid gold!

Panasonic stakes its claim to the LCD crown with this stunning HD Ready, Freeview-equipped TV!
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AUDIOVISUAL TECH LABS BEST BUYS GUARANTEED

All equipment tested in *What Video and Widescreen TV*™ has been evaluated by Audiovisual Tech Labs – the UK's leading independent product-testing facility. Every Best Buy comes with the Audiovisual Tech Labs guarantee of quality, and is backed up by verifiable test data. Only magazines from Future Publishing Limited have access to Audiovisual Tech Labs. Look out for this badge – it's the only sure-fire way of buying a genuine winner instead of a turkey. Please note – all prices listed are guide prices only.

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A complete home cinema package based around a DVD recorder

FIRST LOOK

NEW PRODUCTS AND CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY REVEALED

PANASONIC'S NEW PLASMA GIANT

Panasonic's feverishly anticipated mega-size plasma is poised to hit these shores.

The company has released UK specifications for the TH-65PV00, a 65in flatpanel with full HD-readiness and a hell of a lot more besides that was first unveiled at this year's IFA show (see report, Issue 301). The spec sheet is seemingly endless, with the Viera colour management system and state of the art G8 panel combining to render a brain-scrambling 8.6 billion hues and as many as 2,048 levels of gradation. The latter, in particular, should help eliminate the old plasma chestnut of colour banding, while a contrast ratio listed at a plentiful 3,000:1 should make for very wide gap between the brightest whites and the darkest blacks. This is aided and abetted by a Real Black Drive that banishes pre-discharge light emission that can undercut the richness of darker shades, making them appear grey. And if all that isn't enough, new filtering technology cuts down on reflections and generally gives everything a boost. Even the gas is specified up to the nines, with the TH-65PV500 employing a new type that lights lower electric power levels for extra added brightness.

Detail is given a shot in the arm by a sub-pixel controller that has a look at the incoming video data and makes sure edges and contours are smoothly and accurately rendered by processing the three elements of RGB separately.

Compared to all this, HD-readiness seems a trifle mundane, but be assured that the Panasonic meets all of the EICTA guidelines and then some, with HDMI connectivity and resolution up to 1080i (at 50/69Hz). And there's an integrated Freeview tuner to keep you happy until high

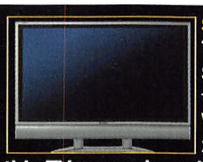
Spec Check

- 65in plasma TV
- HD Ready
- Freeview tuner
- 1366 x 768 pixels
- Viera Colour Management

The bigger the better...

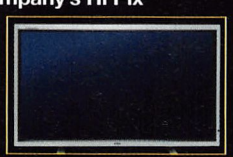
The 65PV500 joins an elite group of screens over 60in. Here's our verdict on some of the others...

Thomson 61DSZ644
Launched at the end of 2004, this 61in DLP rear-projection monster is HD Ready and offers the company's Hi Pix processing.
Verdict: Decent performance but light seepage is distracting



Sharp LC-65GD1E
The biggest addition to Sharp's Aquos arsenal is also the largest LCD TV in the UK. With full hi-def resolution (1920 x 1080 pixels) and DVI input, this TV caused a splash in Japan.
Verdict: Sharp has a tremendous heritage in LCD TVs and this is sure to continue at this bigger screen size. This is a screen to watch in 2006

Fujitsu P63XHA40
This 61in DLP rear-projection monster is HD Ready and offers the company's Hi Pix HDTV processing.
Verdict: Good for home cinema and high definition, but no Scarts or tuners make it far from a true all-rounder



LG 71PY10
Not yet on sale in the UK, but there's a version of this 71in plasma made of 24k gold. Sheer decadence.
Verdict: All gimmicks aside, LG's super-size plasma is a wonder of electronic engineering and could make hi-def material look amazing

SONY VPL-VW100
New SXRD (Silicon X-tal Reflective Display) projector with 6.22 million pixels
Available: **December**

LOEWE INDIVIDUAL >>
A range of fully customisable 26in and 32in LCD TVs
Available: **Now**

Q & A

We get the low-down on plasma screens from Andrew Denham, Group General Manager, Panasonic UK

What technological improvements does the TH-65PV500 have over previous Panasonic plasmas and what benefits do they bring?
The TH-65PV500 is an evolution of our highly evaluated Panel Technologies combined with the convenience of integrated Freeview Tuner. As screen size increases the importance of cell structure and picture driving technology become even more critical. The new PV500 series fulfils the official EICTA HD Ready criteria, and is able to reproduce the wealth of detail HDTV in all its glory.

How important do you think HD-readiness is to consumers and how does this screen maximise HD content?
HD Ready is becoming increasingly important given the forthcoming introduction of Sky HD and the introduction of next generation games consoles. With a native resolution of 1366 x 768 pixels coupled with the new sub-pixel controller, the TH-65PV500 delivers what we believe to be the ultimate viewing experience.

How important is plasma to Panasonic's future flatscreen strategy?
Plasma forms a core pillar of our flatscreen strategy. We have consistently stated that technologies are best suited to certain screen sizes. Up to 32in we believe LCD provides the best performance to price ratio. Above that, plasma comes into its own delivering richer blacks and higher contrast and ultimately delivering more realistic accurate and impressive picture performance.

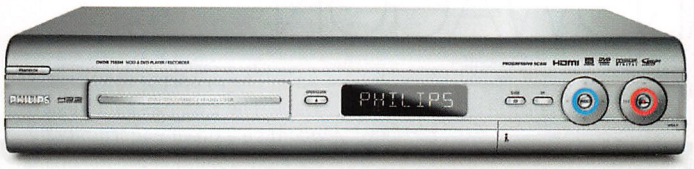
Will LCD become a viable technology at this size?
LCD will certainly become a choice for consumers at these screen sizes, however the benefits of plasma picture performance particularly in the ability to reproduce convincing black levels becomes more noticeable as the screen size increases.

definition broadcasts become the norm. Elsewhere on this hugely well equipped set, SD Memory and PCMCIA card slots enable camera fans to pore over their handiwork on the big screen.

The TH-65PV500 should be on the shelves now for an asking price of about £10,000.

Contact 08705 357357
www.panasonic.co.uk

PHILIPS UNLEASHES TRIO OF DIGITAL RECORDERS



Philips has just unleashed three new digital recorders that count among its most powerful to date, with two of them boasting integrated hard-disk drives.

The combi models (DVDR7300H and DVDR3300H) feature 250 and 80GB respectively, both of which benefit from the Dutch manufacturer's own Flex Time system. This incorporates 'timeshifting' capability, whereby you can watch the beginning of a programme while its end is still being recorded. Both decks also include dubbing at speeds up to 20x, Dual Layer DVD+R recording (alongside DVD+R/+RW) and GuidePlus+ for a week's worth of channel listings. You'll also be able to control external devices, such as Sky boxes, via infrared.

Connectivity is state of the art, with HDMI outputs to feed flatscreens, RGB Scart input for recording and i.Link for connecting up digital cameras. Both are out now and should cost around £400 for the DVDR7300H and about £100 less for the 80GB version.

The third machine in the range, the DVDR3305, is a DVD-only recorder with VIDEO Plus+ and an eight-event timer that is on the shelves now for about £150.

Spec Check
- DVD+R/+RW recorders
- 250 and 80GB HDD
- HDMI outputs
- RGB inputs
- Seven-day EPG
- DV-input

Contact
0906 1010016
www.philips.co.uk

VIEWSONIC'S TRIO (HD) READY FOR ANYTHING

ViewSonic has expanded its NextVision range of LCD TVs by adding three new HD Ready models, with screens ranging from 32in to 40in in size.

The move is part of ViewSonic's strategy to establish itself as strongly in the flatscreen TV market and these additions bolster its previous line-up of 20in and 27in screens.

Decked out in silver surrounds, the three new models – N3260w, N3760w and N4060w – share many key features. All three TVs have a native resolution of 1366 x 768 and all have an HDMI connection supporting signals at 720p and 1080i, earning them that all-important HD Ready badge. Picture enhancement meanwhile, comes courtesy of the deployment of UltraBrite and Clear Picture technology, along with advanced image processing. In the audio department, all of the trio come with a pair of 10W speakers that utilise SRS WOW for virtual surround sound.

The 37in screen has a viewing angle of 178° horizontally compared with the 170° of its siblings, and while all three TVs have a brightness rating of 500cd/m2, the quoted contrast of the 40in set is 1,000:1, as opposed to 800:1 on the other two.

All are expected to be available from November 2005, with prices ranging from £760 for the 32in, up to £1340 for the 40in.

Spec Check
- HD Ready
- SRS WOW virtual surround sound
- PC connectivity
- 3 x Scart sockets (2 on 32in TV)
- UltraBrite image technology

Contact: 01293 643900
www.viewsoniceurope.com

News in Brief

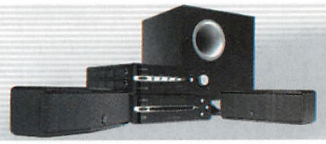
BORED OF BOARD GAMES?
Universal has announced a cracking line-up of DVD games available from 7 November, with *Wallace and Gromit: Curse of the Were-Rabbit* among its key titles.

Many of the titles are family friendly and include favourite TV quizzes such as *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, *Family Fortunes* and *Telly Addicts*, as well as ever-popular Bingo. There are sports-themed betting and quiz games for the boys, and Hi5, a game for kids that uses special dance mats for interactive fun. Rounding up the list is party –favourite 'Spin the Bottle', which contains cheeky dares with a more risqué theme. All games cost £19.99.

SKY WIDENS ITS NET
BSkyB has bought a broadband provider in order to help broadcast programmes on the internet. The satellite company acquired Easynet in a deal announced in October for £211m and will now be able to offer subscribers web-based services and telephony. No details of forthcoming Sky packages were available at press time, but we'll keep you posted on any developments.

FILTERS: OUT
Samsung's latest LCD innovation does away with colour filters in flatpanel displays. The Korean giant unveiled a 32in screen in October that used a sequential colour processing technique that renders hues based on how long red, green and blue lights are emitted from LEDs. The conventional arrangement uses a filter that separates the white light from a fluorescent backlight into RGB sub-pixels; by simplifying the process, Samsung's idea should enable high-quality panels to be produced at a lower cost.

STAND AND DELIVER
How many of you have actually bothered wall-mounting your plasma or LCD? If it's as many of you as we suspect, Gregsons UK should be onto a winner. The Northern Irish furniture manufacturer has just announced its latest flatpanel stand, the Media-Centre. This revolving wooden piece boasts concealed cable management, double glass shelves and is available in four finishes. See www.gregsons.info for more information.



YAMAHA DVX-S30
2.1 Home cinema system with Night Listening and Silent Cinema modes
Available: **Now**

BBC AND ITV JUMP ON HI-DEF BANDWAGON

Both of the UK's original terrestrial broadcasters have committed to start high-definition broadcasting next summer.

The BBC will be broadcasting an HDTV channel via satellite and digital terrestrial, while ITV will be using just ground-based transmissions.

The BBC has previously said that it would not leap into an HD service until a sizable proportion of license fee payers could take advantage of the broadcasts. Indeed, the broadcaster cannot launch new digital channels (HD or SD) without the permission of the Department of Culture Media and Sport, so the HD transmissions that will start in June will be 'tests' – but tests that replicate, in HD, popular primetime output from the existing BBC channels, and will, in all likelihood, develop into a genuine service.

BBC Director of Television, Jana Bennett, said to the Royal Television Society, 'Our promise to license payers is to give them the highest quality television, so the time is right for the BBC to get involved in high definition'.

The BBC aims to produce all its output in HD by 2010 and the HD channel will use the Astra 2 satellites to 'simulcast' those parts of its primetime schedule currently in HD. This already includes much of BBC drama, comedy, documentaries and sport (made in HD for overseas and future sales). The likes of *Rome* and the next series of *Doctor Who* (both pictured above) are all made in HD.

Wimbledon 2006 is likely to be televised in HD and it's widely expected that next year's World Cup will form part of the HD 'trials'. The BBC has said this 'would be a great opportunity to test high-definition broadcasting from a live event'. News will not initially be included, and the bastion of BBC ratings, *EastEnders* is unlikely to be made in HD for some time.

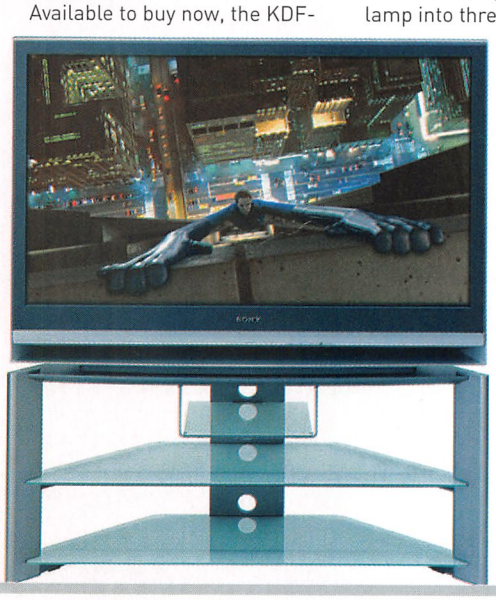
The BBC also wants to trial the HD channel via digital terrestrial broadcasting and has applied to Ofcom to use some spectrum unsuitable for SD. ITV will be producing its own test channel via digital terrestrial, using frequencies already allocated and limited to the M25 area. Until digital switchover, terrestrial trials must be limited as HDTV takes up to four times the bandwidth of normal digital terrestrial Freeview channels. Whereas the BBC's satellite service will undoubtedly be widely watched by those by then equipped with Sky HD digiboxes (available from February), the terrestrial transmissions from both broadcasters are likely to have a much more limited audience because of the lack of equipment available to the public.

BRAVO FOR BRAVIA!

Sony's BRAVIA TV range gets another new addition with the introduction of a 50in rear-projection model – the KDF-E50A12U.

Available to buy now, the KDF-E50A12U incorporates Sony's new 3LCD technology, which uses three projection panels rather than just one to deliver its pictures.

It divides light from the TV's lamp into three separate streams – red, green and blue – and each stream is then shone through its own specific liquid crystal panel to enable better colours. Also on the list of enhancements is Cinema Black PRO to improve contrast by altering the lamp brightness and lens aperture, and a 3D comb filter to enhance image quality. Digital Constant Image technology should help to reduce picture flicker by only switching pixels in areas of a picture where changes are taking place.



It's not all just about the picture with this TV though, and Sony has also indulged in a spot of futureproofing by adding a digital tuner for Freeview reception, plus an HDMI input so that high-definition broadcasts can be received once they begin to air in 2006. There's also a PC input, so that a PlayStation or PC can be plugged in for some seriously bigscreen gaming.

Spec Check

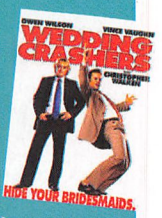
- 3LCD projection technology
- Cinema Black PRO
- HD Ready
- Built in Freeview tuner
- PC input

Contact
08705 111999
www.sony.co.uk

The DVD Brief

THE LATEST DVD RELEASES IN A BITE-SIZE BULLETIN

WEDDING CRASHERS

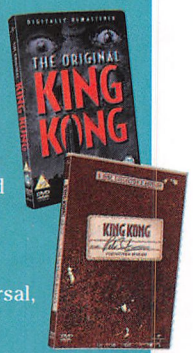


Both theatrical and unrated versions of the Owen Wilson comedy hit the shelves on 28 December (Entertainment in Video, £19.99 and £23.99, respectively).

Wilson and Vince Vaughn star as divorce mediators that crash wedding parties in the hope of picking up women, only for their simple enjoyment to be spoiled when one of them falls in love.

The unrated version includes the option to watch the theatrical version, as well as the usual deleted scenes, commentaries and 'making of' featurettes.

KING KONG



With attention focussing on Peter Jackson's new version, movie buffs may be tempted to add the original 1933 classic to their collection on 5 December (Universal, £9.99).

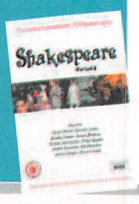
And those that can't wait for the cinematic release of the new version can indulge themselves in Jackson's *King Kong Production Diaries*, also available on 5 December (Universal, £12.99) and including exhaustive (and perhaps exhausting) coverage of the entire eight-month production process.

STAR TREK NEMESIS

The ever-popular *Star Trek* range is boosted by a new recruit in the form of a two-disc special edition of *Star Trek Nemesis* on 12 December (Paramount, £24.99). Bonus features were still to be confirmed as we went to press.

SHAKESPEARE RETOLD

The BBC series *Shakespeare Retold* is released on DVD on 26 December for £19.99. The set includes updated versions of Shakespeare plays: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Macbeth*.



SAGEM AXIUM HD-D50H
DLP TV with Freeview tuner and Crystal Motion technology
Available: **Now**

SHARP LC-65GE1
High-def 65in LCD television with HDMI input
Available: **December**

>>

SEVEN IS HEAVEN FOR DENON RECEIVER

Why have five or six channels when you can have seven?

That's the thinking behind Denon's latest uber-amp that features decoding for all the major extended surround formats. The AVR-3806 also has HDMI switching, which makes it a nerve centre for a next-generation home cinema system, as well as enabling it to process the highest quality high-resolution audio and video. The all-digital connection also benefits from the unusual ability to output (converted) analogue video, so you'll be able to connect a mixture of analogue and digital video sources to the receiver and then output the lot to your screen through a single cable. It's a powerful brute, too, and is able to send a wall-shaking 160W (into 6Ω) down every one of its channels. And there's more than a little brain behind all that brawn, with Denon's newest DDSC-D (Dynamic Discrete Surround Digital) with AL24 Processing Plus presiding over the sounds. It's able to serve three different rooms and another handy gizmo is Audyssey MultEQ XT room calibration technology, which is able to tailor the amp's output to the specific layout and sonic properties of your room and also take into account as many as six listening positions. It's not just about big, Hollywood-style bangs and booms, either: audiophiles will delight in the fully SACD-capable Denon Link 3 connection, which brings you high-res, multichannel audio in pristine fashion.

Out now for around £1,000.

Contact
01234 741200
www.denon.co.uk

Spec Check

- Seven-channel AV receiver
- 160W per channel
- HDMI switching
- Analogue-HDMI video conversion
- Denon Link 3

The AVR-3806 can output a mighty 160W to each of its seven channels

TOSHIBA LEDS THE WAY

A projector is still the most potentially impressive weapon in anyone's home cinema arsenal.

That is, of course, until the bulb conks out and you have to deal with the hassle and cost of replacing it. Never fear, though: Toshiba has pioneered a system using LEDs (light emitting diodes) that promises to up the lamp expectancy to around 10,000hr – not bad, considering most bulbs last for a couple of thousand hours and can cost several hundred pounds to replace. Other technology no longer deemed necessary includes fans and colour wheels, which means that any machine running on LED is going to be one quiet operator. The new method is also much more energy efficient than conventional methods.

Toshiba's groundbreaking idea was unveiled at this year's IFA consumer electronics show, but the company has subsequently announced a business projector boasting the technology. We understand that it will be a battery-powered DLP job with an SVGA resolution (800 x 600 pixels).

There has been no news yet of a home cinema variant, but we'll keep you posted on any further developments as they arise.

Contact 08704 424424
www.toshiba.co.uk

BT BROADENS ITS TV HORIZONS

BT has finally nailed its colours to the audio-visual mast by announcing a digital TV service over broadband.

It is expected to begin in the second half of 2006 and will provide entertainment on demand, accessing a large online library of films, television programmes and music. You'll also be able to summon material from the previous week's selection, which means you won't have to record programmes you missed the first time around. It will be available to BT broadband customers without any additional subscription fees, but there is also a pay-per-view option for certain stuff and, of course, users will get the full gamut of digital terrestrial television channels. On top of all that, there will be instant messaging, chat and video telephony, as well as online games, 'retail opportunities' and community services.

The telecom giant has commissioned Philips to develop a set-top box that will receive the content over an internet connection and record programmes onto a built-in hard-disk drive with capacity for around 80hr of material.

Contact:
www.btplc.com

Win!Win!Win!

UMD MOVIES FOR PSP!

Get your PSP movie collection off to a flying start by winning one of these sets of Universal Media Discs (UMD).

The Day After Tomorrow, *Daredevil* and *Predator* are all released on 7 November and thanks to Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, we have three sets up for grabs. Meanwhile, Momentum Pictures has released *Equilibrium*, *The Football Factory*, *Reservoir Dogs* and *CSI: Grave Danger* (out now) and has given us two sets to give away. To enter, answer the easy question on page 146 and send it with your details on a postcard marked 'UMD Comp' to the usual address.

PHILIPS DVDR9000H
HDD/DVD combi with Pixel Plus and hi-def upscaling
Available: January 2006

SKY HD DIGIBOX
HD Ready digibox with Sky+ functionality and Dolby Digital
Available: February 2006

DELL GETS HD READY WITH NEW TVs

Dell continues to dip a toe into the LCD waters with the launch of two new TVs in 32in and 37in screen sizes.

The W3706MC takes pride of place in Dell's TV range and is joined by the W3202MC, bringing the total number of Dell LCD TV screens available to four. Although all four screens are designed along similar lines, the use of detachable speakers combined with minimal depth lends the new additions a touch more elegance.

Unlike the company's previous offerings, both of Dell's new screens earn themselves HD Ready status thanks to the inclusion of HDMI inputs and both have native screen resolutions of 1366 x 768 pixels. Alongside the HDMI socket are a host of other connectivity options, including DVI, component and a brace each of composite, S-video and Scart inputs.

There are picture-in-picture options aplenty, allowing you to watch two broadcasts at the same time, or watch TV and surf the web using the set's PC input.

The W3706MC meanwhile, also boasts Pixelworks DNX advanced video processing for your viewing pleasure coupled with an 800:1 contrast ratio. The W3202MC's contrast ratio stands at 1,000:1.

Spec Check

- Analogue/Digital twin tuners
- HDMI and DVI inputs
- HD Ready
- TruSurround
- DNX advanced video processing (W3706MC only)

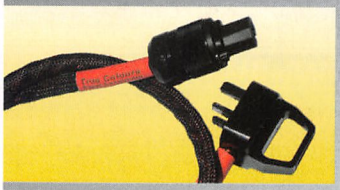
Additionally, you have the choice of analogue or digital terrestrial viewing with these models, thanks to the inclusion of twin tuners, while audio is taken care of by a pair of 30W detachable speakers with TruSurround to provide the virtual surround sound experience.

Both the W3202MC and W3706MC are available now, priced at £1.260 and £1,600 respectively.

Contact
0870 906 0010
www.dell.com

Cable Guy

CABLE GUY, OUR RESIDENT EXPERT, ROUNDS UP THE LATEST LEADS FOR YOUR SYSTEM



NOTHING BUT THE TRU

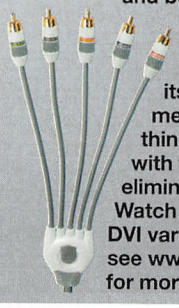
It's easy to be dazzled by flash digital interconnects or chunky Scarts and overlook the humble power lead. If yours isn't up to scratch, though, you can be pretty sure that your lovingly assembled home cinema system isn't operating to its full potential. To this end, cast an eye over Tru Colours Industries' latest kettle lead, the audiophile-grade Super Constrictor Rhodium, This mains cable boasts 16 cores of silver-plated, insulated copper and a PVC-insulated earth wire to filter out any 'dirt' on loads up to 60amps/500W. Prices start at £200/1m and for more information, check out the website at www.tcicables.com or call 07710 196 949.

MONSTER X FACTOR

The Xbox 360 is the hot name to drop in gaming and entertainment circles at the moment and Monster has landed itself the plum job of supply the official cables and connections for it. The lead guru's exclusive contract with the software giant will include HD-compatible component video leads and electrical and optical digital audio connections, as well as analogue S-video and composite video conduits. The next generation console launches on these shores in December, with the cables following shortly thereafter. Check out www.monstercable.com for further details.

PROGRESSIVE THINKING

Bet you thought HDMI meant 'definitely futureproof', didn't you? Not all HDMI cables can handle full-definition 1080p, so it's a good job Ixos came along. The connection specialist has just unveiled its latest contribution to pictorial excellence, the XHT458. This £80/1m HDMI lead can deliver full-bandwidth video to distances up to 25 feet, after which it's still able to pipe 1080i/720p resolution to 80 feet and beyond. Ixos' patented four-layer PC board in the connector itself and solid cast metal plugs keep things shipshape, with triple shielding eliminating interference. Watch out for a DVI variant soon and see www.ixos.co.uk for more.



APPLE'S 'ViPOD' IS HERE

With all the fanfare it could muster, Apple launched its fifth-generation iPod - the first to support video playback, as well as music and photos.

30 per cent thinner than its predecessors, the new player is available in black as well as white. There are two versions – 30GB (£219) and 60GB (£299) – both of which are equipped with a 2.5in. 4:3 colour screen that has a resolution of 320 x 240.

The 60GB model is claimed to store up to 15,000 songs, 25,000 photos or more than 150hr of video. But it won't, unlike other portable video players, support established video formats like DiVX. Re-encoding of such files to 'iPod Video' would be required, using third-party software like Cucusoft's iPod Movie/Video Converter.

Apple, of course, is famous not only for the iPod but iTunes – a service that allows you to buy rights-managed music online. It should come as no surprise, then, to learn that at during the event that introduced the new iPod to the world, Apple also announced a ground-breaking video upgrade to iTunes. Thanks to a deal with Disney – which owns the ABC US TV network – American consumers can now use their broadband internet connections to buy commercial-free 4:3 versions of top-rating ABC shows like *Desperate Housewives* and *Lost* often the day after they are originally broadcast. These shows can be viewed on a computer or copied to a 'ViPod'.

Also available for purchase on iTunes are more than 2,000 music videos, together with six animated features produced by Pixar Studios. Apple claims that in the 20 days since iTunes 6 went live, it has clocked up over one million of the $1.99 video downloads (£1.89 in the UK).

To shorten transfer times acceptably, each heavily rights-managed file has the same 320 x 240 resolution as the new iPod's screen. This equates roughly to VHS quality, so don't expect it to look good on that 50in. plasma!

Apple has also launched the iMac G5, which boasts FrontRow, the company's answer to Microsoft's Windows XP Media Center Edition.

NOKIA N92
The world's first commercially available phone with built-in DVB-H tuner
Available: **Mid 2006**

YOU SRXD THING

DLP and LCD watch out: there's a new technology in town.

Sony's head-turning SXRD (Silicon X-tal Reflective Display) projector, the VPL-VW100 first came to our attention some months ago (Issue 295), but the Japanese manufacturer has only just announced details of its UK release. It employs a radical new panel design that is a cousin of conventional liquid crystal, but improves upon the older technology by employing much smaller pixels than usual. The spacing between each pixel is a microscopically minute 0.35µm (that's just over a third of a trillionth of a metre, or really, really small in technical terms). This almost sub-atomic specification means that the dreaded 'chicken wire' effect is eradicated, leaving you to enjoy a clean, clear watch. You won't go short on detail, either, with a grand total of 6.22 million pixels providing more than enough resolution for the highest quality sources you're likely to encounter over the next decade or so.

It's also remarkably bright, with a Sony record contrast ratio of 15,000:1 ensuring that whites will be blistering and blacks profound.

SXRD technology could spell the end of the chicken wire effect

The welly comes from a powerful, 400W xenon lamp capable of 800 ANSI Lumens' worth of light that claims to help produce 'a flat and natural spectrum, equal to the sunlight' and should last you around 2,500hr. Any hues that come out looking less than perfect, meanwhile, can be tweaked by Sony's own Real Colour Processing and also Image Director 2 software.

It's on the shelves by now and is slated to cost something in the order of £7,000, which, considering not only the technology involved but also its relative novelty, seems rather affordable. Keep an eye on our reviews pages...

Contact 08705 111999
www.sony.co.uk

Spec Check

- HD-ready
- 1920 x 1080 pixels
- Advanced Iris System
- 15,000:1 contrast ratio

News in Brief

RICOH DOUBLES THE FUN

Ricoh's new recordable DVD is optimised for movie storage with a whopping 8.5GB capacity. This double layer DVD+R is quick, too, laying down data about as fast as it's possible to do at 8x thanks to a new, highly sensitive surface coating that enables it to write to its capacity in about 16 minutes. The company also claims a wide compatibility range that includes existing double layer machines, DVD players and DVD-ROM drives. Available now for €27 (£18) for a pack of five.

DELL GETS MEDIA-SAVVY

Hardware supremo Dell has just announced that its latest line of laptops will come with Microsoft Windows XP Media Center 2005. Selected Dimension Desktop and Inspiron Notebook models will benefit from the inclusion of the highly versatile software that enables you to watch and record movies and television (although you'll need a separate tuner for the latter), listen to music and look at photographs on your portable PC. Go to www.dell.com/mediacenter for a full list of the relevant models.

EPSON'S VIEW TO A THRILL

Epson is perhaps a company better known for its scanners and printers, but its latest 'multimedia storage viewers' are steering the company towards the AV world.

The £500 P-400 is primarily intended for playing back JPEG and RAW-format photos on the type of 4:3 LCD screen – 3.8in, with a resolution of 640 x 480 – you just won't find on a digital camera. To this end, the sleek P-4000 includes CompactFlash and SD slots that will directly accept the memory cards of many cameras. But there's also an 80GB hard disk capable of storing music and video transferred from a PC via USB. Such media can then be enjoyed on the move – others can be converted with the supplied Photo! 4 software.

The P-4000 directly supports formats such as AAC, MP3, Motion-JPEG and MPEG4. Other nifty features include a memory card-to-hard disk backup facility, sturdy aluminium casing to make sure it doesn't suffer too much from any knocks it picks up, USB direct-print, 3hr continuous battery life and an AV output for TV playback. This handy device should be on the shelves now.

Contact: www.epson.co.uk

TV TO GO FROM NOKIA

Nokia has unveiled its N92 phone – the world's first commercial DVB-H handset with an integrated DVB-H receiver.

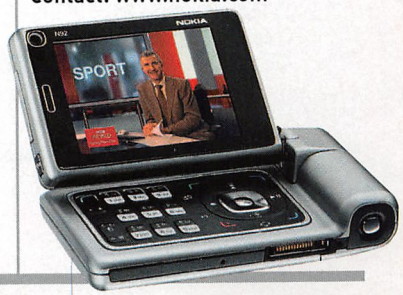
Expected on sale in mid-2006, it forms part of its flagship N series range, the N92 uses the integrated DVB-H receiver to receive and scale the IP Datacasts used to carry TV broadcasts to mobile phones.

The N92 uses a hinged, 2.8in anti-glare QVGA screen for TV viewing and TV services are accessed via a multimedia key. An Electronic Service Guide (ESG) is also provided.

The handset claims to offer 4hr of viewing time, plus recording and a 30-second replay facility.

The estimated, unsubsidised price of the N92 is expected to be €600 (£400 approx).

Contact: www.nokia.com



Spot the difference?

3 in 1 entertainment with built-in DVD VIDEO and DVB-T

(enabling you to view your home movies and 30+ digital channels)

DMTECH introduces the World's First 3 in 1 entertainment LCD TV range.

Now every room in your home or office can enjoy a total entertainment experience. The DMTECH range comes in 17", 20", 26" and 32", all with an integrated DVD player. Plus - the 26" and 32" sizes come with the option of integrated DVD player AND DVB-T (digital tuner) enabling you to view your movies and watch 30+ digital channels.

Built-in vertical loading DVD Player

DVD VIDEO

LCD TV series – LM

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- Built-in DVD Player
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- 16.7 Million Colour

available from*

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Currys www.currys.co.uk

Dixons www.dixons.co.uk

COMET www.comet.co.uk

EURONICS www.euronics.co.uk

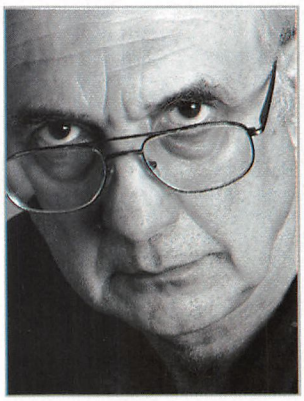
*availability of models may vary

DMTECH

BARRY FOX

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

THIS MONTH BARRY FOX FINDS FURTHER CONFUSION FOR DVD BUYERS LOOKING TO BUY MULTIREGION DVDS, AND FOLLOWS THE LOW KEY LAUNCH OF DUAL LAYER DISCS IN THE UK



Sony is already re-thinking the crazy use of regional coding on UMD movie discs for the PlayStation Portable. The discs are coded like DVDs to stop us using PSP for what it is designed for – travelling around the world and buying discs wherever we are. Region 1 UMDs bought in America will not play on PSPs bought in Europe or Japan. I tested a batch to prove it. Then, while on a recent trip to the USA I tried playing a Region 2 UMD, *Spider-Man 2*, on a Region 1 player. It played perfectly.

Was this a mastering mistake? No, says Sony, after asking head office for a considered statement: 'For Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, regional coding is utilised only on new release titles to protect local theatrical windows. Typically, SPHE uses multiple region coding for catalogue titles. *Spider-Man 2* in Europe was a catalogue title'.

Marek Antoniak, SPHE's Managing Director in the UK (and Chairman of the British Video Association incidentally), has now added: 'All catalogue titles are multiregion and most new releases are as well unless there are specific instances where the US would be coded Region 1 and the UK would end up as Regions 2-4.'

By these definitions virtually all Region 2 releases are 'catalogue'. They have already been released in the USA. So why label a movie as Region 2, or Region 2-4, when it is 'all regions'? The incorrect labelling will confuse travellers who would like to buy a few discs while travelling.

One of the Region 1 UMDs that I tried on a Region 2 player was *T2*, which dates back to 1991. The R1 disc refused to play on the R2 player, even though *T2* clearly rates as a 'catalogue' title.

> "The enquiry desk looked blank and asked if I was talking about blank discs"

The only reasonable deduction is that Sony is making up PSP policy on the hoof. And this is making the company look very foolish.

Rack 'em up

At last there is some movement on DualDisc, the double-sided CD/DVD that was seen as the way to get DVD-Audio discs into record shop racks, alongside hybrid SACDs. A single-sided dual layer SACD plays stereo on a CD player and surround on a surround SACD player, so can be racked with CDs; a double sided DualDisc plays stereo from one side in a CD player and video and surround from the other in a DVD deck, so can also be racked with CDs.

The format was officially unveiled in Europe early this year but the major labels did not back the launch. Since then everyone has been watching and waiting for an announcement.

Recently I spotted a batch of Sony-BMG Dual Discs in an Oxford Street store. So where was the announcement? And as the record company is 50 per cent owned by Bertelsmann AG and 50 per cent by Sony Corporation of America, how does Sony reconcile promoting the DVD-Audio-saviour against SACD?

Perhaps I was the only audio-video journalist not to get a press release. Perhaps not. But it took a lot of persistent detective work to find the PR agency which Sony-BMG had hired to promote the launch, and get a copy of the official announcement. It was stirring stuff.

'Following a successful launch in the US, Sony-BMG Music Entertainment launches DualDisc in the UK – a new entertainment product with two experiences… a dramatic expansion of the music entertainment experience.'

'Artists have a broader palette to express their creative vision, and consumers get even greater value with unique content that brings them closer to their favourite performers,' said Andrew Lack, CEO, Sony-BMG. 'As we roll out DualDisc across Europe we anticipate a strong and extremely positive response from both retailers and fans.'

The announcement lists 20 titles, with no mention of DVD-Audio or the MLP lossless compression system used for DVD-Audio surround. The DVD side 'features a wide range of exclusive content such as the same album in enhanced sound (such as 5.1 surround sound or enhanced LPCM stereo), music videos, interviews, photo galleries, concert footage, lyrics and more.'

So Sony is protecting its investment in SACD by using DualDisc only to deliver standard Dolby Digital surround.

'We believe DualDisc will be well received by the UK public,' added Richard Story, Senior Vice President, Commercial Division, Sony-BMG.

Yes, but only if the public know about the discs. I checked for DualDiscs in HMV and Virgin in London's Oxford Street.

The enquiry desk at HMV first looked blank and asked if I was talking about 'blank discs'. But a young man was found who knew about the 'new format' and said there was no special section for DDs. They are mixed in with CDs.

As a check I looked for the Miles Davis DD *Kind of Blue*, and found it in the Jazz racks; in fact there was a mix of imported NTSC and local PAL versions of *Kind of Blue*, all at the recommended price £10.

Virgin had a small display rack for a few DDs, but said the rest were in the CD racks. I checked the Jazz section for the Miles Davis DD but there was no sign of it.

The Miles DD is very good value at £9.95 with the *Kind of Blue* album in stereo on the CD side and a Dolby Digital surround mix on the DVD side, along with an excellent 25 minute 'making of' documentary about the recording session.

This kind of music and video material could make DualDisc very appealing. But it costs the record companies a lot to create the content and press the discs. And most people won't have a clue what the discs are when they are browsing through the CD racks. If they buy any it is likely to be by mistake.

Sony-BMG will have to be a lot more creative with publicity for DualDisc if the format is to fly ■

digitaldirect.co.uk

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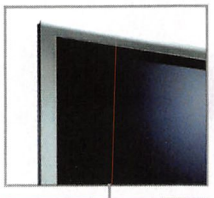
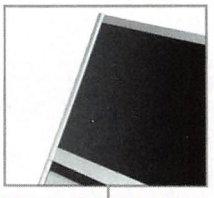
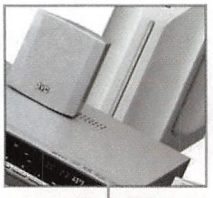
Wide Screens



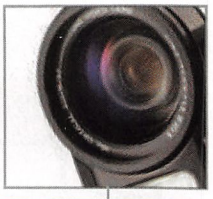
Plasma Screens



LCD Screens



Home Cinema



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Pioneer

PLASMA TV / PDP-436FDE

- The PDP-436FDE is the latest, stunning high definition plasma design from Pioneer featuring the same resolution and 3000:1 contrast ratio as the XDE variant. • Featuring 1 x HDMI input and an analogue media box, the item represents a logical, higher value alternative to the XDE. Basically, why pay more?

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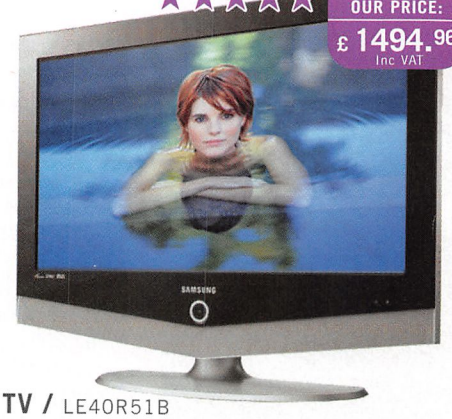

LCD TV / LE40R51B

- The Samsung LE40R51 is a stylish 'HD Ready' 40" LCD which features a HDMI connection, powerful sound output, stylish integrated front speaker, SRS TruSurround sound, 3000:1 contrast ratio, Colour control+, 10 bit signal processing, brightness sensor and much more!

" MAKE YOUR FRIENDS JEALOUS!"

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TOSHIBA
LCD WIDESCREEN TV / TX-26LXD500

- 26" High Definition LCD Television, with integrated DVB Tuner, VIERA Colour Management System, Advanced LCD AL, 2 Way reflex speakers, HDMI Input, PC Input and SD/PC Card Slot. • Colour: Silver

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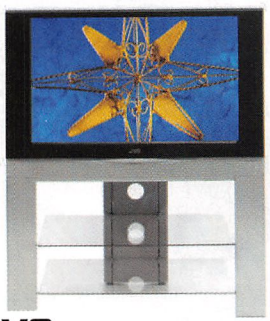

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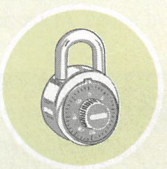

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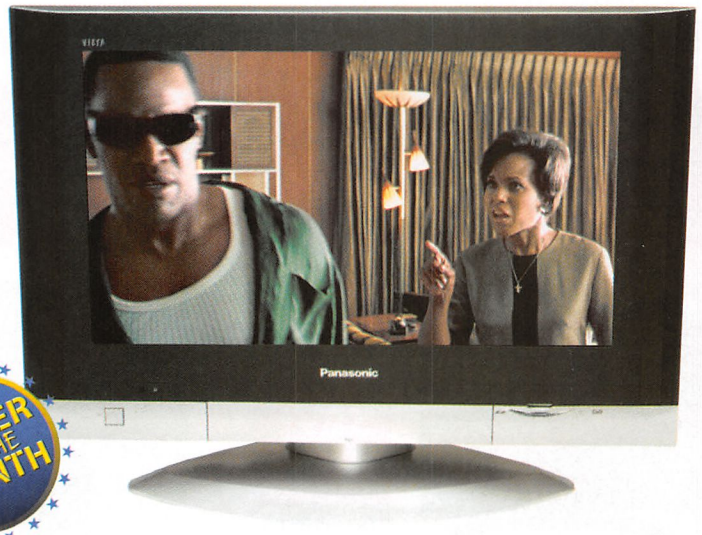


You can have the best kit in the world but you won't get the benefit if your connections aren't up to scratch

I am about to upgrade my DVD player and widescreen TV so that my system will include: Sony RDR-HX910 DVD recorder (above), Panasonic TX-32LXD500 LCD (right), Yamaha RX-V630, KEF KHT 2005 system and a Sony PS2.

I found choosing the kit easy, but when it comes to connections I am at a loss. As far as I can make out, I'll need the following: HDMI cable for the DVD to the TV for picture and sound, a digital audio connection between the PS2 and the DVD to the receiver, a Scart between the PS2 and the TV and speaker cable. Anything I'm forgetting?

What I'd really like to know is what are good cables for such a system? There are too many to choose from. My budget isn't huge, so low to mid-level would be ideal. Also, a quick thanks for the great mag and for putting reviews on the website.

Neil Feakins, via email

Thanks for your support: glad you enjoy the mag and find it useful. Your connections all seem to be in order: just bear in mind that when you are playing DVDs, the sound should be via the digital audio connection between your DVD deck and receiver, not via the HDMI into your TV. As for cables, you are limited only by what you are prepared to spend.

If your system is in your front room rather than an acoustically-perfect, purpose-built home cinema room, there really isn't much point going mad on cables. Anything solidly built and with a reasonable amount of shielding will do the trick: this goes for all types of cable. If you are looking for an affordable Scart, you can do a lot worse than the Vivanco Pro Wire, which is about £25. If you want something more flash, check out QED's range (we use a £30-ish P2110 in the office) or anything by Ixos. For cheap speaker cable, have a look at van den Hul's Bridge model, which retails for about £6 per metre. Check out the same brands for digital audio interconnects and HDMI leads.

The best thing to do is pop down to your local dealer, tell them what you want and how much you are prepared to spend and they should be able to put together a set of wires for you on the spot. I wouldn't spend more than £30 per lead, as beyond this point the differences are not going to be discernible in your front room, but do go for something that looks like it will last.

Jim Findlay

The yoke's on me

My rear-projection Toshiba 43VJ22P TV has developed a problem. It has red fringing towards both sides of the picture. Occasionally, the fault will disappear, generally when the set has been running for a few hours and is very warm. I called in a local repair firm but the man who came didn't seem to know much about the set. He said he thought a tube had failed. Can you help please?

Peter Edmunds, Chichester

These CRT-type rear-projection sets have convergence yokes fitted to their necks, driven by 'tailored' currents to align and overlay the images from the three tubes – it's necessary because two of them are off-axis. The convergence currents come from big, hot-running ICs, and they can fail in various makes and models. In your case Q753, type SLA4501M, will probably be responsible. Get this one fixed by a Toshiba-appointed engineer: ring 08704 424424.

Paul Richards

Will my PAL be the same?

I've got a Toshiba 32ZP38B, and I'm planning to move to New Zealand soon. If I take the TV with me – will it still work there? I've heard that there may be some problems with different transmission frequencies, sound etc. Thank you for any help you can give.

Lee, via email

New Zealand uses the same basic encoding and scanning system as we do: PAL 625/50. The difference between the two countries lies in the transmission standards, meaning that the compatibility of a British TV can be said to be downstream of the Scart/AV input sockets. Thus operation with anything that hooks to these (disc or tape recorder/player, satellite box etc.) is assured, while terrestrial reception will require a 'native' tuner, available there as part of a VCR, or in stand-alone or cable (where available) form. Check out the transportation cost of this TV!

Paul Richards

How will I get out of my box?

Now that we are starting to see more devices with HDMI connections, I wonder what will happen when there are more than two such boxes? HD Ready displays only have one connector as far as I can see, and in future there may be several feeds for it: DVD recorder, Sky box – and there's already an AV receiver from Panasonic with an HDMI port. How could these be interconnected?

Vince Gander, via email

Send your queries to: **Video Forum, What Video and Widescreen TV, Future Publishing Limited, 53-79 Highgate Road, London NW5 1TW,** or email: **VideoForum@whatvideomag.com.**
The best letter wins a DVD, but please keep them brief! For a guaranteed personal reply, post your query with a cheque for £4.95, made payable to Eugene Trundle, together with an SAE

The new generation of display panels and source boxes will incorporate more than one HDMI port, and this digital coupling system permits daisy-chaining/loopthrough, also auto-switching and routing, similar to the 'pin-8' switching and control functions we have at present with Scart connections.

Meanwhile there are already HDMI and DVI switchboxes available, though they are presently a lot more expensive than the Scart equivalents.

Paul Richards

Leading me on

I have just purchased a new Toshiba television 37WLT58. I also have a JVC DR-MX1 and a Pace Sky+ Box. These are all connected by Scart leads. Is it possible to plug them in with Scart to high-definition sources and if so would this improve the picture quality which is already very good.

If these leads are available could you please tell me where I could acquire them?

I have been a reader of your magazine from the beginning, your wealth of knowledge over the years has been invaluable.

Roger Thompson, via email

Thanks for your letter and we're glad you have enjoyed the mag over the years. I am afraid Scart leads can't handle high-def stuff, although it's academic at the moment as there is little or no high-def material around. HDTV and next generation video discs (Blu-ray and HD-DVD) are all on the horizon (Sky, for example, is launching an HD service next year) but you'll need the right kit to enjoy it and your current DVD recorder and digibox will only work with standard-definition material. Your TV, however, is ready for high def and so, when it comes, you'll be able to plug in any new HD equipment using HDMI leads. Until then, stick with RGB Scart or component video connections as the best connections for your set-up.

Jim Findlay

It's all a blur to me

The majority of my viewing is football, and even though I cannot wait to swap my bulky CRT set for an LCD type, I'm concerned about the poor reputation of these screens in terms of motion blur, especially on fast-moving sports pictures. I don't want to fork out £2,000 or more for something which gives bad results! Is this problem likely to be resolved in the near future?

Steve Wilson, via email

In its basic form, an LCD display is quite 'sluggish', taking an appreciable time to get from one brightness level to another after the electrical driving signal has changed. The result is comet-tailing on any fast-moving picture object.

As well as using an improved liquid crystal material, current designs also use an 'overdrive' signal with relatively high applied voltage to speed up the change in polarisation; in some models the response time can be as little as 5–7 milliseconds. Check them out on Sky Sports in your local shop.

Paul Richards

Where shall I put my tuner?

I know I can buy a TV with a Freeview tuner built-in, or a DVD recorder likewise. But where I've got the choice (buying new), is it best to have the tuner in the TV or the recorder? I want to be able to record a Freeview programme while simultaneously watching another, Freeview or analogue. Your guidance would be appreciated.

Keith Visser, via email

If the only Freeview tuner available were in the TV it would have to be switched on whenever you wanted to record a Freeview programme! Thus the digital recorder needs to have the tuner fitted. Some models have two tuners to facilitate simultaneous recording and viewing of different programmes.

With analogue closedown looming we should all be looking at IDTVs, but a cheaper and more flexible alternative is the use of any TV as a monitor in conjunction with an inexpensive (£50 upwards) Freeview box.

Paul Richards

TV's bum wrap (around)

Apparently, the recurring fault on my beloved Sony KV-FX29TU TV is field foldover. As I understand it, this is where part of the picture is 'wrapped round' in the vertical plane. I've taken it to my local service centre on numerous occasions and they have replaced transistors and capacitors in the frame deflection circuit.

Can you suggest any further action which may be taken to prevent this fault cropping up again? I want to do everything I can to prolong the life of this set as it gives such a superb picture.

Mike, via email

The two components which most often cause field foldover effects in this FX chassis are diode D506 and capacitor C524 in the output section of the field timebase. It's important that the replacement diode is the correct type (GP08D or U056) rather than a substitute.

Paul Richards

>>

NO RGB, NO DIGITAL COMMENT

My new Sony IDTV has two Scart inputs, one RGB and one S-video, connected respectively to a Samsung cable box and a Toshiba DVD player. I now need to connect a JVC DR-MH30 HDD/DVD recorder. I didn't choose this, it came from Richer Sounds in guarantee-exchange for a failed Pioneer model. Because it has no RGB input I have to record cable-borne pictures in relatively low definition via composite video. Is there any way round this?

Fred Merrill, via email

It's very bad that the JVC DR-MH30 has no RGB input facility. In cases like yours this throws away much of the capability of the DVD recording format.

The best you can do is to get an RGB-to-S-video converter, not ideal but capable of better picture definition than a composite coupling. These inexpensive converters are available from Keene Electronics on 0870 990 9000 and Lektropacks on 08700 711 911.

Paul Richards

MY DIGIBOX IS BUGGING OUT!

I watch Freeview via a Thomson DHD4000 PVR. As soon as ITV3 and E4 opened I noticed that when they transmit 16:9 pictures my Panasonic PL10 TV switches to wide mode OK, but the pictures appear in squashed anamorphic 4:3 mode. No amount of thrashing the zoom key on the TV's remote control will give a correctly-proportioned picture. Images broadcast in 4:3 mode are reproduced properly. I've contacted ITV and Thomson but each blames the other. What's going on?

John Jackson, via email

The fact that all the other TV channels are OK indicates clearly that this is a software incompatibility between the broadcast scan-control data and the decoder in the receiver. I understand from you that Thomson has had similar complaints from other DHD4000 users. The result will be (if it hasn't appeared by the time you read this) an over-the-air software update to purge this bug.

Paul Richards

NEW ZEALAND AND BUST

I live in Germany at present, and I'm on my way, in a couple of months, to New Zealand to live. I'm somewhat short of cash, and equipment and it is about 40 per cent cheaper to buy here than in NZ. Can you guide me towards a good HD Ready TV? I've been looking at the Panasonic TH-42PV500 and the Samsung DVD-SP50L7H.

I need, too, a decent DVD/CD player that won't break the bank, and would very much appreciate a recommendation on that.

Stephen Eke, via email

Both of the screens you mention are HD Ready, and both are very good, 5-star material. Even so, one is a plasma and the other a rear-projection type, quite different in picture presentation and texture. Read carefully the *Advice Zone* and *Buyer's Guide* sections of this issue and base your choice on the features, appearance and style, that are right for you. Regarding the DVD player, I would recommend the Yamaha DVD-5557 and the Samsung HD945.

Paul Richards

>> We just don't connect

After careful scrutiny of your reviews I have invested in a Hitachi plasma TV, Sony DVD recorder, Sky+ 160 digibox and Denon (multiregion) home cinema system. I'm wondering now what is the best way to connect it all together, and whether I can do any damage if I connect it incorrectly. This is the downside of buying on the internet, there's no friendly expert to give guidance!

David Martin, Tamworth

Well, you have a choice of vendor, and you get what you pay for! Start with the Denon surround-sound system, using the wiring diagram in its user-manual rather than those of the others, so that it becomes the control centre.

It's very common now to find expert home-entertainment hook-up services advertised in local papers and Yellow Pages; these people can also supply and program universal remote controls. If you decide to do it yourself, contact me again with any specific problems.

Paul Richards

This month's prize

Every month, the contributor of the best letter wins a copy of a new DVD release. The prize this month is the re-released *Star Wars Trilogy* boxset, courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment.

This generous boxset boasts *Episodes IV, V* and *VI* of the hugely popular franchise, plus audio commentaries from director George Lucas, all packed onto three discs.

You all know the drill by now: three of the most exciting and influential films of the last 30 years chart the story of Luke Skywalker's intergalactic journey from gauche farm-boy to lightsaber wielding Jedi knight, meeting up with some of the most memorable heroes and villains along the way, including one rather surprising relative.

The restored and remastered *Star Wars Trilogy* is out on 5 December and costs about £35 – a perfect gift for Christmas.

We're all going on a summer holiday

I've been considering buying a portable DVD player for use on holiday. Often the accommodation we use has a TV, and it would be ideal for the disc player to connect to this so that we can take advantage of the bigger screen. Unfortunately, most of the TV sets are very basic, with only an aerial socket. Is there any way I could achieve a connection?

Steve Webb, via email

So long as you holiday in or near Europe you can achieve what you want. Since portable disc players have S-video/phono AV connections rather than conventional Scart/composite ones, you need an S-video-to-composite adaptor box and an RF (UHF) modulator, together costing upwards of £35. You can get these bits from specialist accessory suppliers like CPC plc, Keene Electronics and Lektropacks.

Paul Richards

Picture this

Last month I purchased a Philips LCD screen, model number 26PF5520D. At the same time my parents bought the 37in version. Now we are both having the same trouble in using them in RGB mode with Sky boxes: the picture is less sharp and steady than with PAL (composite video) selected. Philips, via its 15 pence per minute 'helpline', says it cannot reproduce this effect in its labs. Can you help? My Sky box gives good RGB pictures into my main TV, a 50in Pioneer plasma model.

Stuart Ross, via email

We've got a 26PF5520D in the shop, so I had a trial run, on your behalf, with RGB feeds into the EXT1 Scart socket from a DVD player and a Sky box. The results were good, with the expected large improvement over composite/PAL feeds. Since you've confirmed the quality of your Sky box's RGB feed we have to assume that the problem is in your set; and that it may be some form of batch/production problem. Talk to the dealer that supplied the set.

Paul Richards

Can I still dish it up?

At present I have an old analogue satellite dish which I quite often use to watch Eurosport. I also get the five terrestrial analogue channels via a UHF aerial. I can record any of these six channels (on VCR) while watching any of the other five. Can I continue to do this if I go digital? I'm thinking of buying a Panasonic plasma TV and DVD/HDD recorder.

David Townsend, via email

With digital equipment you can go on as you have been as long as analogue signals continue, from Astra 1 and from terrestrial transmitters. For simultaneous viewing of digital broadcasts you would need two tuners in one form or another: IDTV, digital recorder, set-top box. During the changeover period you could use one analogue and one digital. For good Freeview reception you may need to get an aerial upgrade.

Paul Richards ■

Tube nostalgia

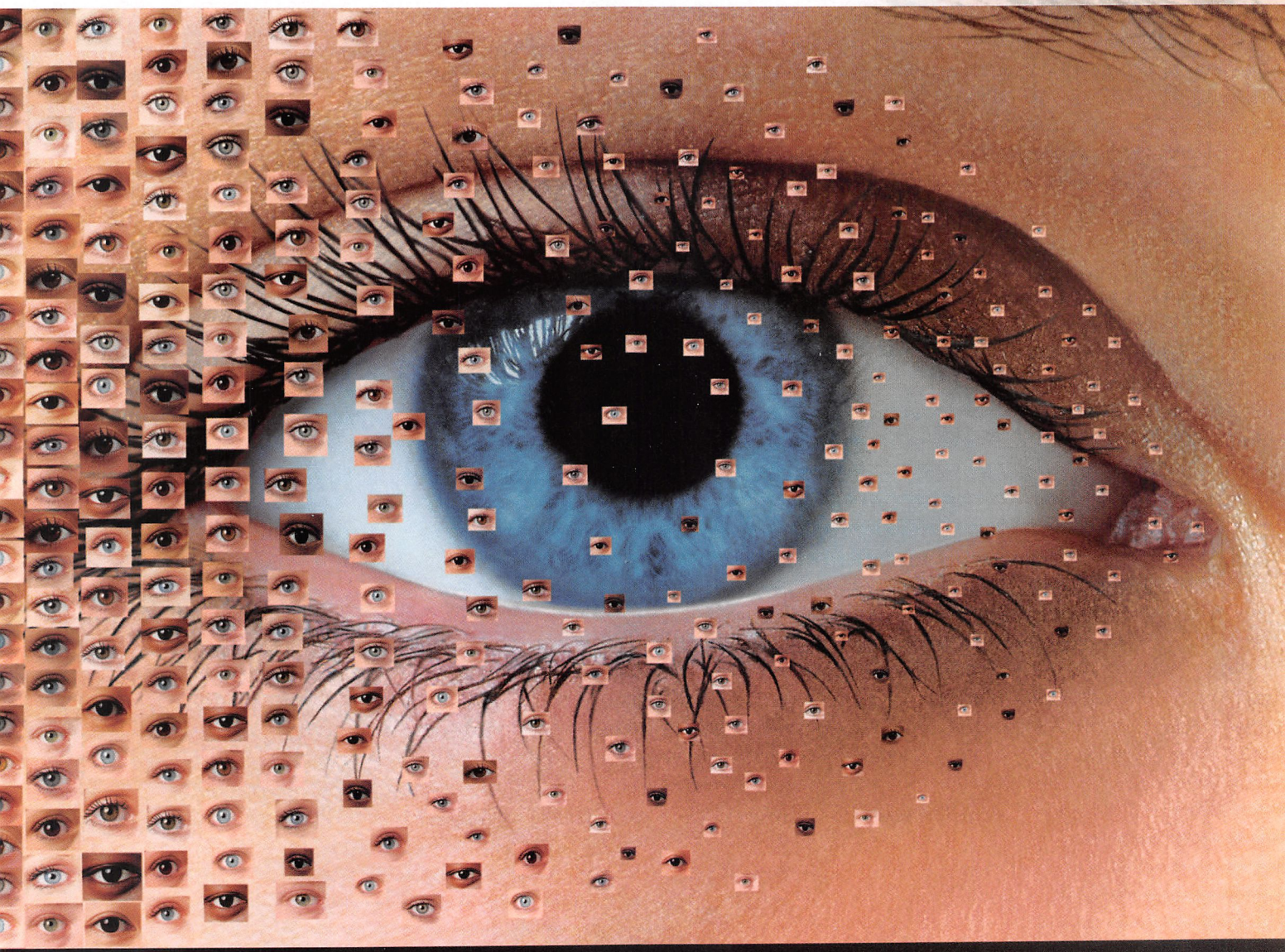
I appreciate that there is little glamour associated with CRTs, although experts seem to agree that the better ones have performance at least the equal to that of the best LCDs. Unsurprisingly, I am finding it extremely difficult to find a review on the tube models I am considering. Although two of these (Sony KD28DX200 and Philips 28DW6559) have been reviewed, the televisions themselves seem to be in short supply. I also like the look of JVC's AV28EX5BK, and I am wondering if the quality would be as high compared with my existing JVC 21in model, which I have had for eight years. A review would be of great assistance, but where do I find one? Is there any sign of one appearing in your trusty journal?

Malcolm Ford, via email

We still feel that CRT has a very important role to play in home entertainment and, to that end, published a group test of them in Issue 299. In it, we reviewed the 32in version of the JVC and awarded it four stars: the set is basically identical to its smaller equivalent, so you may extrapolate from that fairly safely. If in any doubt, arrange for a demo at your local dealership.

Jim Findlay

Pioneer sound.vision.soul



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ONES TO WATCH

KILLER KIT COMING SOON TO A *WHAT VIDEO* NEAR YOU...

SHARP LC-32GD7E

Sharp's elegant Aquos flatscreens just got thinner and lighter with the Titanium range, as this stunning TV demonstrates...

And as well as good looks, this LCD screen has an integrated Freeview tuner and electronic programme guide support, vertical and horizontal viewing angles of 170° both ways, Dolby Digital decoding, picture-in-picture, a battery of connections and it's HD Ready, with a resolution of 1366 x 768. Could you possibly want your TV any more futureproofed than this?

Connections
HDMI, component, Scart, S-video – take your pick! And there's a D-Sub for hooking up to a PC too.

Advanced Super View (ASV)
This bit of wizardry is responsible for that ultra wide, 170° viewing angle. The screen also utilises a low reflectivity construction to stop bright, sunny environments spoiling the view.

1-Bit amplifier technology
The amplifier samples sounds 64x faster than CD and uses all digital processing.

Single speaker box
All your woofers and tweeters in one place underneath the screen, enclosed by a special net that has twice the aperture ratio of previous models for improved sound flow.

SANYO PLV-Z4

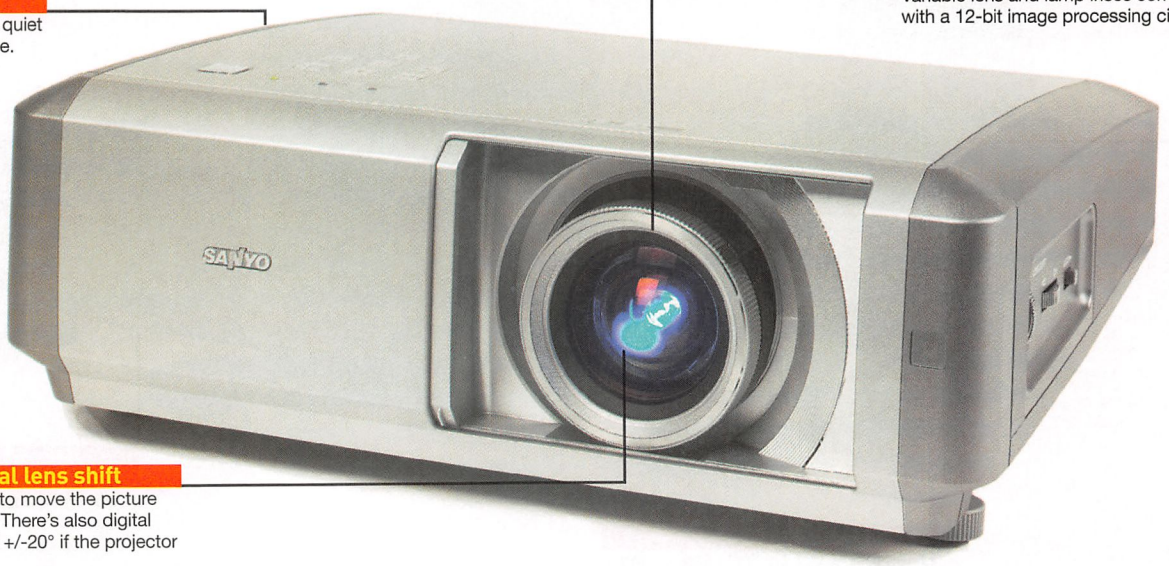
This all-singing, all-dancing LCD projector aims to give the DLP big-hitters a run for their money.

The successor to Sanyo's Z3 offers a native resolution of 1280 x 720 in 16:9 mode and an exceptional contrast ratio of 5,000:1 with 1,000 ANSI lumens brightness. It's also HD Ready thanks to the inclusion of an HDMI input and can provide a 100in image from between three to six meters away from the screen – handy when you're working out where to put it in your lounge!

Illuminated remote control
You need never grope around in the dark for your projector zapper again!

High contrast optical system
Variable lens and lamp irises combine with a 12-bit image processing circuit.

Low fan noise
At a mere 22dB, it's as quiet as the proverbial mouse.



Horizontal/vertical lens shift
Just in case you need to move the picture up, down, left or right. There's also digital keystone correction of +/-20° if the projector is aligned off-centre.

PINNACLE SHOWCENTRE 200

Get your digital music, movie and picture files off your PC and on to your TV and audio systems, without the need to splash out on a fancy media centre PC.

This slim silver box links through a wired or wireless (via Wi-Fi) connection to your regular home PC to let you enjoy DiVX and HD videos, photos and music through your AV equipment from the comfort of your sofa. It has enough inputs at the back to compare with any decent DVD player, and can even act as a PVR if you buy the separate Pinnacle PCTV tuner card.

Connectivity
Scart, component, composite, S-video and a pair of digital audio outputs line up on the back, and you'll find Ethernet, Wi-Fi and USB interfaces on board too.

MediaManager software
This will catalogue all media content on your PC and can be used to create playlists, import files and convert unsupported file formats. It also has parental control functionality too.

PVR functionality
Using the separate PCTV tuner card, the ShowCentre 200 becomes a PVR with support for analogue, satellite and Freeview, so you can record your favourite TV shows and play them back.

Multiple file format support
DiVX, MPEG1, 2 and 4, AVI and WM9 files are all supported on the video front, while MP3, WAV and WMA head up the music file list. JPEG support is also included for images.

Progressive scan
Enjoy a sharper picture with progressive scan, courtesy of the component video connections. Other connections are an RGB/ S-video-capable Scart and a digital audio input.

Cable management system
When your home cinema system looks this good, the last thing you want spoiling the effect is a mess of unsightly wires. A specially designed interface manages all your cables for you.

Sonowave Surround Sound
A full six-channel amplifier provides the power and independent drivers are positioned at precise angles to deliver the sound around the room.

Audio playback
Listen to SACD, CDs (including –R and –RW), MP3 and WMA files or if that's not enough, try the FM tuner instead with its 40 pre-set channels.

PHILIPS HTS8000S

Some home cinema systems favour style over substance, but not this Philips HTS8000S 2.1 system. The elegant HTS8000S looks good enough to win a place in the most stylish of homes and it backs up its good looks with a fistful of features. Its Sonowave surround sound technology provides multichannel sound from the system's pair of speakers, plus there's progressive scan, Dolby Digital and Pro-Logic II, SACD support and a FM tuner for your musical needs.

VIBRANT *images.* **ULTRA-CLEAR** *sound.*
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The CEDIA side of AV

Rob Lane reports from the CEDIA Expo in Indianapolis, one of the biggest consumer electronics events of the year, to give you a taste of where the AV industry is taking us over the next year and beyond...

Sometimes it pays to be on the inside, to be able to get the inside track on what's up and coming – and that's why *What Video & Widescreen TV* remains at the forefront of audio-video technology after 25 years at the top. We're not just casual observers to the exciting world of AV, we pay an active role in the industry behind the products that enthrall you (and burn a hole in your wallet). So, although we cover the world's best consumer electronics shows within these pages (events in places like Vegas – CES – and Berlin – IFA – that you can attend, time and money permitting) we also like to get under the skin of the industry at its trade events – where the best AV gear is often revealed for the first time.

The American CEDIA (Custom Electronic Design & Installation Association) Expo is arguably the most important of these annual trade shows. Staged at the Indiana Convention Center and RCA Dome in Indianapolis, Indiana, CEDIA Expo is the only show that meets the specific needs of the 'residential custom electronics industry', or as we call it in the UK, Custom Installation (CI). This year, more than 26,000 retailers and industry gurus (plus *What Video*!) gathered in Indy for the five-day event from 7-11 September – the highest attendance in the Expo's 16-year history. More than 500 AV and CI exhibitors occupied the Indiana Convention Center and RCA Dome, as well as the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown hotel. This year's Expo was possibly the best ever – certainly in terms of the kit on show.

Sharp demonstrated the LC-65D90U 65in LCD TV, one of the Expo's most impressive products

The earth is flat – it's official

With the high definition and flatpanel revolution gathering momentum (the US is way ahead of us

WHAT IS CEDIA?

CEDIA (Custom Electronic Design & Installation Association) is an international trade association of companies specialising in designing and installing electronic systems for the home. A not-for-profit association based in Indianapolis, Indiana, the association was founded in September 1989 and has more than 3,000 member companies worldwide. The organisation is controlled by its members, who annually elect officers and board members.

CEDIA's members are found throughout the world, and the UK has its own CEDIA association and annual Expo – which you can only attend if part of the trade (or a *What Video* journo!). CEDIA members are established and insured businesses with bona fide qualifications and experience in this specialised field. They do a lot more than just sell you a flatpanel TV – they'll come round to your house and install it on your living room wall as well! And if you can find the money, they will install a complete home cinema system, with cables hidden under carpets, speakers in your walls, intelligent lighting and temperature controls! With custom installation and CEDIA, the world is quite literally your AV oyster.

Right: JVC expanded its HD-ILA rear-projection TV line up at CEDIA with three new 1080p sets, including this 56in model (HD-56FH96) plus 61in and 71in versions

The Island © 2005 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved.

Below: Already on sale in the UK, Sony's Bravia range has invigorated the company's flatpanel TV sales

in terms of HDTV), there was a palpable sense of excitement amongst attendees. This year was the first time that flatpanel TVs – plasma, LCD and also rear-projection models – had bossed the Expo, with HD demonstrations ubiquitous throughout (see *Demo Heaven* on the next page).

HD demos aside, what else caught our eye at CEDIA? Obviously, there were those sexy new TVs from the likes of Fujitsu, Pioneer, Sony and Panasonic, which we'll see in UK stores soon. The most impressive was Sharp's 65in LCD behemoth, the LC-65D90U. Also showcased at this year's IFA consumer event, the LC-65D90U was shown to *What Video & Widescreen TV* in much more exclusive surroundings and by invitation only! Currently the world's biggest LCD that you can buy (Samsung demonstrated its 102in model, but it's currently just a prototype), the LC-65D90U is something special. We saw it in action at very close quarters, and were seriously impressed. The colour reproduction, levels of detail and contrast were excellent, and it was one of the best HD demonstrations we witnessed at CEDIA.

Other TVs came from Sony, with its Bravia range. Already available in the UK, Sony hopes Bravia will help to revitalise its flatpanel TV sales, hit by competitors like Samsung, and by the glut of new-name brands that are all vying for the pound in our pockets.

Location, location, location (free)

Sony was also touting the next generation of its Location Free TV concept. Location Free allows you to watch your favourite TV programmes and DVDs wirelessly – at home and via the internet while out and about. Sony's 12.1in LCD monitor with touch panel connects to its base station (both pictured below) via a Dualband MAT (Multi-directional Audio & Visual Transmission) antenna. The Sony-developed MAT antenna is said to achieve stable wireless AV streaming with real-time and high-speed transmission.

Even more exciting is Sony's NetAV, which allows you to connect to your Location Free base station via a broadband internet connection from outside your house – at a hotel, for instance.

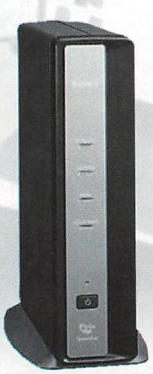
Rather surprisingly, given that this was a mega-high-end event, the good old video/DVD combi was still in evidence, with the likes of LG and Panasonic pushing products that we were more used to seeing in 2001 than in 2005. Still, we consider the combi to still be a very important product (not everyone has Sky+, and not everyone has junked their VHS collection), so it was pleasing to see it in such high-grade company.

Of course, there were more obvious recording media on show, with Panasonic, LG and JVC – to mention just a few – showing off their HDD/DVD recorders. There were also, as you'd expect, HD DVD and Blu-Ray recorders from most of the consumer giants, but it's far too early to be talking about release dates for these products, and most were concepts only – or non working samples.

iPod brings world together

One thing that really dominated this year was iPod – kinda strange when you consider this event is for the high-end custom industry, but less so when you take into the account the massive influence iPod now has over hi-fi in general. High-content portable storage devices are big news in 2005.

In the context of CEDIA, iPod is mainly about product integration. Manufacturers such as Monitor Audio is riding this bandwagon hard with products like i-deck that allow you to port your



manufacturer of quality custom installation touchpanels that can control top home cinema systems, had its 2-way iPod interface on show. This is available for custom installers so that they can integrate their customers' iPods with their expensive home cinema installations.

But what really caught our roving AV eye was the iPort system. Pitched somewhere in between Monitor Audio and Creston, iPort can be recessed into your wall and integrated into your existing AV system. You don't need to be a custom installer to buy and enjoy it, but (as our picture shows) it helps if you can afford to pay someone else to incorporate it into your setup. The worlds of hi-fi and home cinema have finally come together – and about time too!

It's *so* Hollywood

Perhaps the most exciting, but ultimately disappointing, aspect of the Expo this year was the evidence of the closer working relationship of the hardware manufacturers with Hollywood. The movie industry is now making more money from its DVD releases than from the theatrical runs of its films, so it obviously has a big stake in DVD and HD. Most of the discussions with the AV industry regarding movies and home entertainment products take place behind closed doors, so it was nice to see the links being celebrated openly for a change at the Direct From Hollywood forum.

Three big hitters from the Hollywood studios were rolled out to tell us why Next Generation Media (ie high-def DVD) is so important, and we were very excited to be invited along to an extremely exclusive gathering of the world's media. However, whilst it was nice to hear the views of Pat Fitzgerald from Buena Vista, Adrian Alperovich of Sony Pictures, and Brit Peter Staddon from Fox who, rather unsurprisingly, all backed the HD future. The forum ultimately turned into a back-slapping exercise for Hollywood, with the kind of consensus seen only at major new format launches or following the speeches of violent dictators.

Oh well, at least we know our HD future is secure. Hollywood and the consumer electronics giants need it to succeed, if we are to maintain or increase our AV spending into the second half of this decade, and beyond. Rest assured, *What Video & Widescreen TV* will still be here to tell you what's hot and what's not long after HD has become old news and the next gen of AV product (3D, perhaps?) is exciting the industry at CEDIA Expo n

Above: The iPort from Sonance can be recessed into your wall and integrated into your existing AV system. It'll bring a smile to anyone's face

Below: LG's VHS/DVD recorder was one of many combi decks on show at CEDIA – proof that we're not quite ready to say goodbye to tape

DEMO HEAVEN

We've never seen so many HD demos in one place – it was mind blowing! It gave us a great chance to see just how good the latest breed of TVs and projectors look with HD source material. Even TVs that were a low specification on paper shone with HD movie feeds – so maybe you don't have to spend big to enjoy HD. It certainly explains why so many budget HD Ready plasmas and LCDs are starting to appear on the UK high street.

The most popular demo was the trailer for Michael Bay's *The Island*. It looked incredible, and during a demonstration on a pretty average projector, it transformed a dreadful performance into a world-beater at the flick of a switch (ie from regular DVD to HD). This highlights an interesting paradox for our reviews team: whilst HD is the apex of what's possible from TV and projector pictures, it may be easier for us to gauge a product's performance from regular DVD and TV inputs! So when you read our reviews over the coming months, consider performance with and without HD – the differences will surprise you.

So just how good is HD? Well, put simply it's incredibly detailed, sharp and almost 3-dimensional. Detail is so fine, colours so vibrant and contrast levels are so high, that it's almost like looking through a pane of glass. The first time I witnessed it, several years ago at the CES in Las Vegas, I thought it was a trick – even going so far as to look behind the early plasma display that was showing the footage in case they were cheating. Once you've seen HD, you won't want anything else.

Crestron showed a 2-way iPod interface for integrating the ubiquitous Apple device with AV kit

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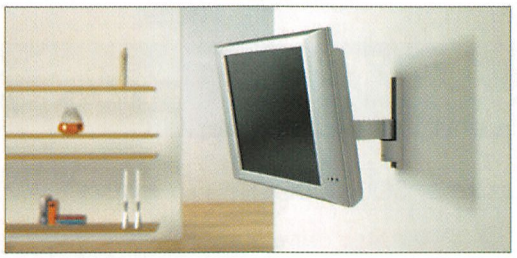

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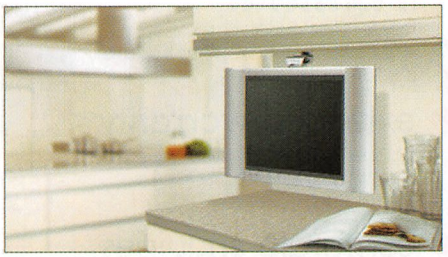

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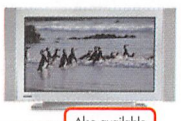

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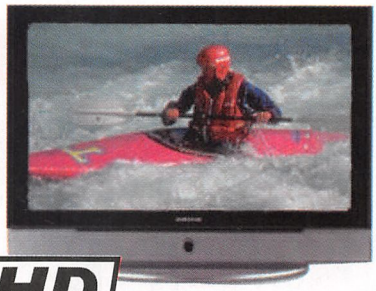

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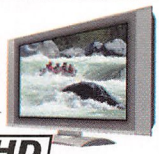

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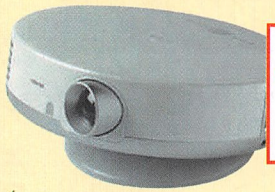

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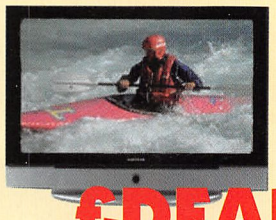

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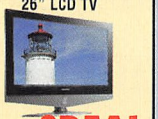
Panasonic TX32LXD500

32" LCD TV

£DEAL

SAMSUNG LE26R41BDX

26" LCD TV



£DEAL

TOSHIBA 32WL56

32" LCD TV

£DEAL

SHARP LC32P50E

32" WIDESCREEN LCD

£DEAL

A/V RECEIVERS

DENON AVCA1XV	£CALL
DENON AVR1908	£249.95
DENON AVR2106	£CALL
DENON AVR2308	£CALL
DENON AVR3806	£CALL
DENON AVR4806	£CALL
DENON DHT136XP	£CALL
MARANTZ SR4500	£CALL
MARANTZ SR5500	£CALL
PIONEER VSX1014TXV	£CALL
PIONEER VSX1015	£CALL
PIONEER VSX1015TXV	£CALL
PIONEER VSX1016TXV	£CALL
PIONEER VSX453	£CALL
PIONEER VSX453TXV	£CALL
PIONEER VSX515	£CALL
PIONEER VSX815	£CALL
PIONEER VSX915	£CALL
PIONEER VSX916	£CALL
PIONEER VSX917	£CALL
SONY STRDA7100ES	£CALL
SONY STRDB2000	£CALL
SONY STRDB835	£CALL
SONY STRDB835D	£CALL
YAMAHA DSP29	£CALL
YAMAHA RXV757/757SE	£299.95
YAMAHA RXV857	£CALL
YAMAHA RXV867	£CALL
YAMAHA RXV4600	£CALL

CD RECORDERS

YAMAHA CDRHD1500	£479.95

TUNERS

DENON TU1800DAB	£199.95

MP3 PLAYERS

SAMSUNG YH925GS	£169.95
SONY NWHD5	£179.95
TOSHIBA MEGF20	£219.95
TOSHIBA MEGF40	£259.95
TOSHIBA MEGF60	£259.95

HI FI SYSTEMS

DENON DM33	£CALL
DENON DM35DAB	£239.95

SPEAKER PACKAGES

KEF IQ5	£CALL
KEF KHT1005	£CALL
KEF KHT2005.2	£CALL
KEF KHT10	£CALL
MISSION M-CUBE	£CALL
MISSION CINEMA MX	£CALL
MISSION CINEMA M30	£CALL
YAMAHA YSP1	£CALL
YAMAHA YSP800	£CALL

HOME CINEMA SYSTEMS

DENON DHT500SD	£389.95
DENON DHT550SD	£CALL
DENON XMS1DVS	£CALL
DENON S301	£CALL
JVC DP500AL	£CALL
JVC THR1	£CALL
JVC THR2	£CALL
JVC THS11	£CALL
JVC THS22	£CALL
PANASONIC SCHT15	£CALL
PANASONIC SCHT25R	£CALL
PANASONIC SCHT30	£CALL
PANASONIC SCHT35	£CALL
PANASONIC SCHT880	£CALL
PANASONIC SCHT880W	£CALL
PHILIPS LX3000D	£CALL
PHILIPS LX4300SA	£CALL
PIONEER DCS323	£CALL
PIONEER DCS525	£CALL
PIONEER DCS535	£CALL
PIONEER DCS545	£CALL
PIONEER DCS575H	£CALL
SAMSUNG HTP35	£CALL
SONY DAVDB100	£CALL
SONY DAVDB1000	£CALL
SONY DAVDB1100	£CALL
SONY DAVDZ100	£CALL
SONY DAVDZ500	£CALL
SONY DAVDZ510	£CALL
SONY DAVHDD710	£CALL
SONY DAVX1	£CALL
TOSHIBA DAVSB200	£CALL
YAMAHA SD63HK	£CALL

DVD PLAYERS

DENON DVD1720	£CALL
DENON DVD1920	£219.95
DENON DVD2910	£CALL
DENON DVD3910	£CALL
DENON DVDA1XV	£CALL
JVC HRXV28	£99.95
PANASONIC DVDS29	£CALL
PANASONIC DVDS48	£CALL
PANASONIC DVDS53	£CALL
PIONEER DV989AV	£CALL
PIONEER DV989AVi	£CALL
SAMSUNG DVD841	£CALL
SAMSUNG DVHD850	£79.95
SAMSUNG DVL9500	£79.95
SONY DVNS300	£CALL
SONY DVNS725PS	£CALL
SONY DVNS9000ES	£CALL
SONY DVPNS975V	£CALL
TOSHIBA SD26VB	£CALL
TOSHIBA SD34VB	£CALL
TOSHIBA SD350E	£69.95
TOSHIBA SDP1600	£CALL
TOSHIBA SDP2700	£CALL
YAMAHA DVDS2500	£CALL

DVD RECORDERS

JVC DRM100	£CALL
JVC DRM150	£239.95
JVC DRM250	£CALL
JVC DRM300	£CALL
JVC DRM500	£299.95
JVC DRM505	£299.95
JVC DRMX1	£399.95
LG RH1000	£199.95
LG RH1000V	£CALL
PANASONIC DMRE500	£CALL
PANASONIC DMRE510	£299.95
PANASONIC DMRES10	£CALL
PANASONIC DMRES20D	£CALL
PANASONIC DMRES30	£CALL
PHILIPS DVDR3320V	£CALL
PHILIPS DVDR3330V	£CALL
PHILIPS DVDR3400H	£CALL
PHILIPS HDRW720	£CALL
PIONEER DVR445DS	£CALL
PIONEER DVR545DS	£CALL
PIONEER DVR845DS	£CALL
PIONEER DVR940	£CALL
PIONEER DVRT101	£CALL
SAMSUNG DVDR122	£129.95
SAMSUNG DVDVR320	£199.95
SHARP DVRBR550H	£CALL
SHARP DVRHD60H	£299.95
SONY RDRGX210	£CALL
SONY RDRGX310	£CALL
SONY RDRHX910	£CALL
SONY RDRHX910	£CALL
SONY RDRHX910	£CALL
TOSHIBA DVR1	£179.95
TOSHIBA RDXS34	£CALL

LCD TV

DM TECH DML4117WD	£CALL
DM TECH DML4117WDL	£CALL
DM TECH DML4126WD	£CALL
DM TECH DML4126WDT	£CALL
DM TECH DML4132WD	£CALL
DM TECH DML4132WDT	£CALL
HITACHI 17LD4200	£CALL
HITACHI 23LD4500	£CALL
HITACHI 26LD4500	£CALL
HITACHI 32LD4500	£CALL
HITACHI 32LD7200	£CALL
JVC LT-15Z50	£CALL
JVC LT-17Z50	£CALL
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JVC LT-23Z50	£CALL
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JVC LT-37Z50	£CALL
JVC LT-37X58	£CALL
LG 20LC2R	£CALL
LG 26LC2R	£CALL
LG 32LC2R	£CALL
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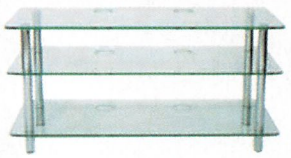

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Reasons to go Dutch

Martin Pipe pays a visit to Philips Research to find out what clever new devices the Dutch innovators have got lined up for us

PHILIPS

Just outside the southern Dutch city of Eindhoven lies the High Tech Campus, a disparate sprawl of buildings that host thousands of engineers, scientists and support staff working at the cutting-edge of disciplines like electronics, computing, biotechnology and materials science.

You'll find nearly 40 companies at this location, ranging from small start-ups to global concerns like IBM, SAP, ST Microelectronics and Sun Microsystems. But the biggest employer is Philips, with no fewer than 11 of its divisions (including its global research headquarters) based at the campus. This is perhaps hardly surprising, given that Eindhoven – one corner of the Netherlands 'technology triangle' that's also defined by Leuven and Aachen – is also known as 'Philips City'.

A Philips technician punches a mood pillow after it displays a text message that's not to his liking

Let there be Philips' lights!

It was here that the company laid down its roots as a manufacturer of carbon-filament lamps back in 1891. Eindhoven grew with Philips' success – by 1939, it was employing 45,000 people worldwide – and the city centre is a living testimony to this fact. The names of many of the city's streets and buildings (including the stadium of local football team PSV Eindhoven) are today connected in some way to the company responsible for the Philishave, compact cassette, CD, laser disc (the analogue precursor of DVD), the first home VCR, PolyGram Records and energy-saving lighting.

In 2004, Philips and its global workforce of nearly 160,000 clocked up sales amounting to over €30 billion in fields as diverse as medical systems, lighting, semiconductors, domestic appliances and, of course, consumer electronics. Of these, around 2,000 are employed in research, design and development. A fair proportion can be found at the High Tech Campus, working on the technologies that will power the consumer goodies of tomorrow.

Some are spin-offs of ideas rooted in other disciplines; the 'Ambilight' picture content-dependent ambient-lighting system (below), intended to reduce eyestrain, was developed by the lighting division for medical use. After replacing the austere and sterile bright white illumination typically associated with hospital environments with subtle ambient-lighting, patients – notably children – were found to be more relaxed.

Other schemes are, however, developed with home-use specifically in mind. One of the facilities maintained by Philips Research at the High Tech Campus is the continuously-evolving 'Homelab', which aims to trial the more avant-garde of Philips' initiatives within a domestic context. The HomeLab's rooms replicate the ones you would find in an average dwelling, but enhanced by new user-focused technologies that aim to provide improved communication with the outside world, new man-machine interface concepts and radical home-appliance prototypes that bring comfort to day-to-day living. It may be powered by hidden banks of equipment interlinked by hundreds of metres of wiring, but HomeLab allows the researchers to assess these concepts on ordinary human 'guinea-pigs' before 'reducing' them into a marketable product.

Interestingly, the effects of building ambient lighting into a TV were judged using the HomeLab. Within two years of the trial, flatscreen sets with Ambilight on board were on sale.

MirrorTV on the wall...

Another TV concept that owes much to HomeLab is the 'MirrorTV' (below), which went on sale as the 'Miravision' in 2004. It's an LCD monitor that can also work as a mirror and is a perfect example of what Philips calls 'embedded technology'.

In the HomeLab, MirrorTV formed part of the 'B@throom' – as users brush their teeth, the display – which is built into a glass wall – reads out health information (weight, for example, is measured using a set of scales mounted into the floor tiles directly in front) as well as TV news reports and local traffic information. The glass is touch sensitive, allowing users to interact with the information system, and back heated to prevent it steaming up.

Its commercial fruit, the MiraVision product, is currently targeted at hotels, but those integrating electronic systems into upmarket homes are obviously expressing an interest. In addition, you'll find a 30in version of the MiraVision on sale at prestige department stores like John Lewis and Selfridges. Currently, it's not cheap at £2,700 – but in time, we might be able to replace our low-tech bathroom mirrors with a MiraVision descendant.

Matrix revolutions

Also vaguely display-related are what the HomeLab team call 'photonic textiles'. The basic idea is that a fine matrix of miniature coloured LEDs is woven into special fabric that also contains flexible interconnecting wires. When driven by suitable electronics, the LEDs are capable of displaying patterns.

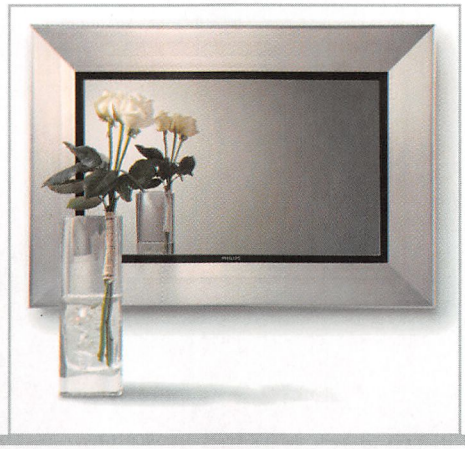
In the HomeLab, engineers showed photonic textiles built into a 'mood pillow' (below) – the glow of the LEDs is softened by a diffuser – and a backpack that gives directions. The mood pillow has touch, sound and heat sensors so that it can respond to the user's presence; a variant displays text messages from a 'Bluetoothed' mobile phone.

Alas, the resolution is rather low at the moment with a hundred or so LEDs (each of which represents one of the display pixels). But, given time, and a greater quantity of low-power tri-colour LEDs, the same technology could be used to produce a 'flexible' LED-based TV set or even a reusable and foldable 'electronic newspaper', to which subscribers could transfer an electronic internet-downloaded version of their favourite daily.

iCat among the pigeons

User-interfaces also form a key part of HomeLab's research program. Two examples stood out in particular. The first is iCat, billed as an 'experimental platform for human-robot interaction'. The iCat takes the form of a stylised feline head on a pedestal. A cat was chosen because it's a creature with which most of us are familiar. Its garish yellow colour was presumably chosen because it appeals to children.

iCat intelligently interacts with the user in various ways including animated motion (its eyes, lips and mouth move), touch, light and speech (there's a microphone and speaker onboard, for



speech recognition and synthesis). Philips reckons that devices like the iCat have plenty of potential roles in the home. It could act as an interactive and tactile educational aid, help the elderly to remain independent and socially active for longer, simplify household tasks like setting the alarm system or cooking, and even recommend TV programmes for viewing or recording – based on the individual family-member preferences that it 'learns' over time. A loosely-similar idea is Dimi, a 'smart companion' that's best described as an interactive sculpture. Dimi – a column of of six vertical illuminated panels – uses speech, light and motion to interact with users. Its upper section (head) will even turn to follow them as they move around the room.

How low can Bary go?

But not all of the fun was to be had in the HomeLab. Leading off the labyrinthine corridors of the other Philips Research buildings are labs that resemble more closely the stereotypical views of such establishments – racks of busy-looking equipment, staffed by even busier white-coated engineers, programmers and technicians. Among the spectrum-analysers, test-generators and prototyping-systems were some fascinating examples of embryonic AV technology.

One was the 'BaryBass' (below), a speaker technology that produces deep-bass from an extremely-small enclosure. Effectively, it's a miniature, low-frequency subwoofer – and Philips reckons it could endow flat-screen TVs, portable digital audio players and in-car audio with a 'true bass' sound. Traditionally, reproduction of those often-elusive lower octaves requires large drive units. Philips gets around the problem by using a small purpose-designed transducer that resonates at a specific frequency (60Hz).

As a result, it can be up to 10 times more efficient than a normal loudspeaker. The electronics part of the BaryBass equation maps the entire 20 - 120 Hz sub-bass range onto this single frequency. Due to this mapping, low frequencies are not reproduced in the same way as a conventional subwoofer. However, the original pitch of the mapped range is evoked by their harmonics, which remain unchanged. The system, as demonstrated, sounded a lot better than we expected it to!

Dib, dib, DAB

'Spatial audio coding', meanwhile, is a backwards-compatible multichannel add-on for digital broadcasting. Philips told us that its new development could lead to 5.1 DAB broadcasts. Indeed, our demo involved a 'closed loop' DAB transmitter and modified digital radio tuner. The system extracts the spatial cues present in a multichannel audio signal, and generates a compatible 2-channel audio signal together with a special 'add-on' datastream.

This spatial add-on is small, occupying only around 10 per cent of the bandwidth of the 2-channel audio stream. The 2-channel audio stream will provide stereo reproduction on 'normal' equipment – with no loss of quality, according to Philips. Standard radios would simply ignore the spatial add-on. Even with a typical (160kbps) DAB radio stream, the overall bandwidth of a full 5.1 signal would be less than 200kbps.

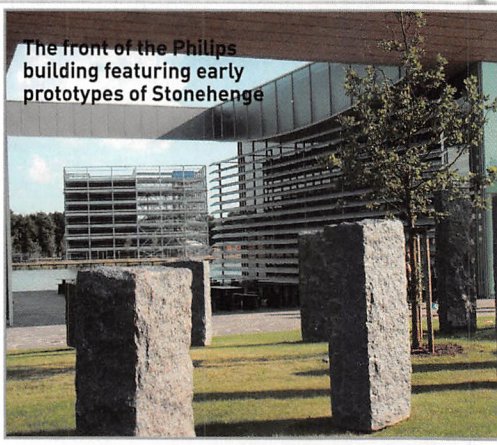
This represents a major saving on, for example, the 384kbps of Dolby Digital 5.1 – which is, of course, incompatible with DAB. To take advantage of the system, listeners would need a special radio with the 5.1 decoder built-in. This uses the spatial cues to reconstruct a 5.1 version of the two-channel audio signal. The system, as demonstrated, sounded surprisingly good with excellent channel separation. Spatial audio coding can also convert a mono channel into 2-channel stereo with little increase in bandwidth. With streaming clearly in mind, the technology has been approved for use with the latest 3GPP mobile-telephony standard.

Screen that tells two stories

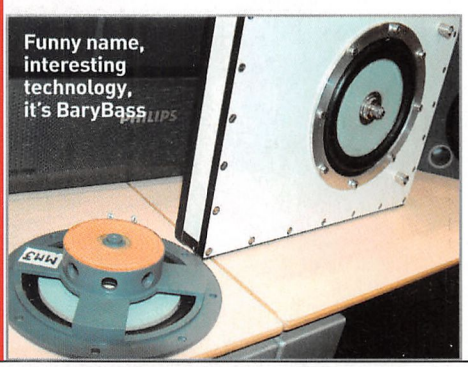
Then there's Philips' work on displays. In addition to 3D LCD prototypes – aimed primarily at medical users – we were shown an intriguing display that can show two different images depending on the viewing angle. Were it to be installed in a car, for example, the driver could use satellite navigation while the front-passenger watches TV. Philips is also enhancing mobile phone displays – it sees work here as particularly important, given that television and video are expected to be the 'next big thing' in cellphones. A variant of the company's established Digital Natural Motion technology improves the quality of video that's streamed, owing to bandwidth constraints, at a low refresh rate (typically, 10 frames per second against broadcast TV's 25). Normally, this would impart a noticeable 'judder' to moving objects like football players and cars. But 'Mobile Natural Motion' calculates intermediate frames by 'guessing' what should be in them – even allowing for multiple motion paths – and the result is a much smoother picture.

Mobile video doesn't just use low refresh rates to pare down the amount of data to a level that's suitable for streaming. Resolutions are much lower – typically 240 x 160, against DVD's 720 x 576 – while significant MPEG4 compression tends to introduce unwanted artefacts like blocking. Enter the mobile version of Pixel Plus, which 'invents' extra pixels thereby improving the subjective resolution (240 x 160 to 480 x 320 in our demonstration). It also detects and reduces the artefacts that are the hallmark of heavy compression.

Combine Mobile Natural Motion with Mobile Pixel Plus, and low-bandwidth video starts to look good on larger-screen cellphone-type devices. These technologies also have other applications, ranging from

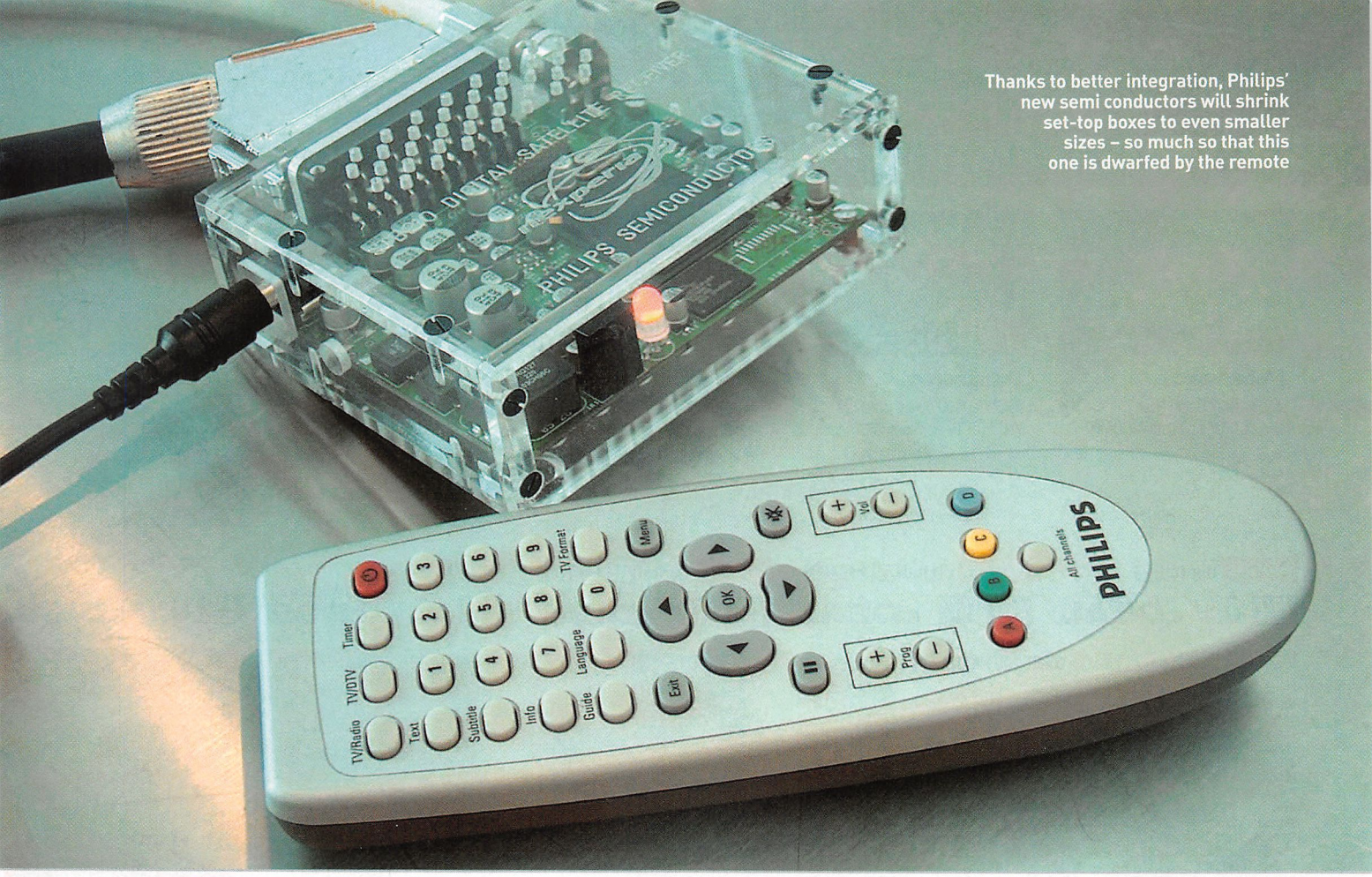


The front of the Philips building featuring early prototypes of Stonehenge



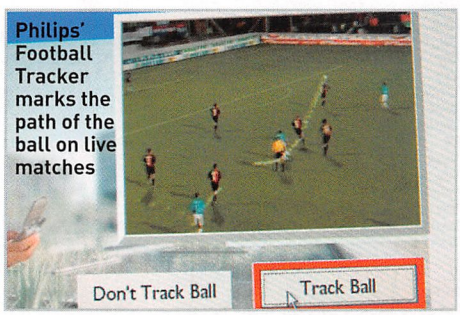
Funny name, interesting technology, it's BaryBass

Philips technicians take the liquid element of the Liquid Crystal Display a touch too literally with their 3D display



Thanks to better integration, Philips' new semi conductors will shrink set-top boxes to even smaller sizes – so much so that this one is dwarfed by the remote

Philips gives a demonstration of Blu-ray



Philips' Football Tracker marks the path of the ball on live matches

A demo of NFC for keyless entry to cars

personal media players (especially ones that opt for solid-state memory instead of higher-capacity but fragile HDDs) to satellite videotelephony.

Cheap as chips

On the subject of personal media devices, Philips engineers demonstrated a complete 'reference design' based around its next-generation Nexperia chips. More of the functionality is now integrated into a single chip – in this case, the PNX0190 – and so the players can be made smaller, less power-hungry and cheaper. The PNX0190 supports recording and playback of a variety of audio and video formats, including MP3, AAC, MPEG1 DiVX 3/4/5/6, WM9, H.264 and MPEG2.

Drivers for LCD panels are included, as are power management, the ability to run Java applets like games, a PCI interface for peripherals and a S/PDIF digital audio output. The PNX0190 will even upscale video to 720p or 1080i, and so one can guess that the chip will find its way into DVD players and set-top boxes. But full integration has yet to be achieved – the chip requires separate digital-to-analogue and analogue-to-digital converters for analogue audio and video. In addition, interfaces for USB, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and HDDs necessitate additional hardware.

On the reference design – a ploy often used by chip-manufacturers to reduce the time their customers take getting products based around their silicon to market – this additional circuitry was present. Perhaps future Nexperia chips of this type might also embed support for another new technology which, like CD, was co-developed by Philips and Sony. This is Near-Field Communication (NFC), a low-power short-range radio technology designed to allow the secure exchange of data over distances measured in centimetres.

NFC, described as a 'virtual connector', operates at frequencies of 13.5MHz to offer bitrates of between 106kbps or 212kbps. Philips claims to have achieved experimental bitrates of 424kbps, and reckons they could go higher still. Applications of NFC include contact-free identification – 'smart posters' that will automatically download relevant information about the advertised product to a mobile phone – digital cameras, 'keyless' vehicles and kiosks that sell MP3s, Java games or ringtones. As these examples demonstrate, the Philips research labs are a hotbed of innovation – who knows what they'll be working on next year? n

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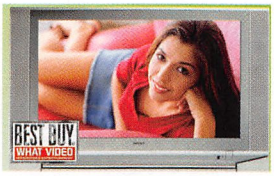

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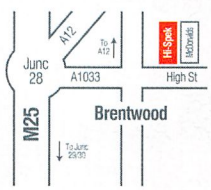

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Sony Always shines on TV

Fresh from Sony's screen triumph in last issue's *What Video & Widescreen TV* Awards special, Steve May talks frankly to Andreas Ditter, the man behind Sony's screen effort in Europe

It's not been an easy couple of years for Sony. The Japanese giant has seen its consumer electronics sales slide south and as a consequence it's been forced to undertake drastic restructuring – 10,000 jobs will have been lost before the end of the year.

Much of its corporate pain has come from collapsing sales in its television division; the company has seemed remarkably slow in recognising the importance of new flatpanel technologies. But, with last issue's triumph in *What Video & Widescreen TV*'s annual equipment Awards, is it all about to change for the better?

We talked exclusively to Andreas Ditter, Director, Television Marketing Europe at Sony Europe, about Sony's changing attitude to TV technology.

When the shift began to new display technologies such as plasma and LCD, Sony really didn't seem to have its eye on the ball. How much did this hurt the brand and do you regret not being a leading force in panel production?

'According to our latest consumer research (we do it every quarter), consumers think we are the leader in flatpanel, even if dealers and some members of the press think we're not. Have we managed to transport our reputation in TV from CRT to flatpanel? To a certain degree, I think we have. Sony has a heritage when it comes to knowing how to make a good picture, and that's very important. I think the press have missed the point when they make the claim that Sony has missed the boat on flatpanel technology. It's not about the panel itself. That's the one thing we need to make people understand.

'The panel is just a piece of glass, with either LCD or gas in between. What really makes the difference is what silicon you put behind it; that's what makes the picture: good motion compensation, whether you use 2D or 3D comb filters etc. And it's there that we have a lot of credibility. Even after the Trinitron era was over, Sony was all about signal processing. And it's in that respect that we lead. I think the only thing we haven't done well is communicate this properly.'

Since 2003, Sony has taken flatpanel very seriously. It's taken a while to get all the Wega Engine processing sorted.

'To a certain extent this is a marketing issue. Philips has done well with its Pixel Plus brand. The name says everything for them. We haven't done such a great job in marketing our brilliance. We have to work harder.'

Looking at the latest Sony range, it seems very biased to LCD. Is there no future for plasma in Sony's future?

'Yes, we have put our focus onto LCD. But there is still room for plasma when it comes to screens bigger than 42in. I think that's the only justification for plasma. Actually, if you want a bigger screen, then Sony believes that rear-projection is actually a better solution.'

Sony's LCD rear projection sets haven't been that well reviewed. But what we've seen of Sony's SXRD rear-projection technology in the US has been stunning. When will SXRD come to Europe?

'2006. We won't be bringing the original 70in Qualia SXRD model to Europe. It would be nice to have it, but it's not really commercially viable. The biggest set we'll bring in will be 60in, priced around £5K.

'That said, our latest LCD-based Grand Wegas are a big improvement over previous models. We have used new technology to improve the black level. The set are XGA HD Ready, and come in 42, 50 and 60in sizes. Our big push here will be on the 50in screen size, because they will sell for about the same price and size as a 42in plasma. We are very excited about rear-projection.'

How does an SXRD display compare against LCD for picture clarity?

'It's difficult to say, as I've not really seen a comparable 70in LCD or plasma. Samsung has demonstrated one, but it was crap. I think our Triluminous LCD model (which is 42in) and SXRD have the same picture quality; the LCD is brighter, but the SXRD has better black levels.'

LCD may be your panel of choice, but it is notorious for certain image problems: motion smearing, black level issues etc. Can these be overcome?

'Sure. You just need to get your silicon and panels better; the technology is only a few years old. A few more years and they will be fixed. You can overdrive the panel to reduce the motion smearing. It just takes an engineer to work out how to solve the problems.'

The big buzz for enthusiasts at the moment is HD. But it's taken some time for Sony to release HD Ready screens...

'HD itself is not really that important at the moment. It's just another TV standard. Today, PAL is HDTV. Eventually, everybody will have HDTV, but it will take a while because not everybody will want to pay to watch Sky HD. Unless the BBC and other broadcasters embrace it 100 per cent it won't happen quickly. It will take at least two or three years before we reach a tipping point. The tipping point is not when there's more HD than standard definition broadcasting, but when the interest/sales curve really begins to pick up. One World Cup in high definition will not make it happen. We also need HD packaged media, which brings us to the HD-DVD versus Blu-ray debate.

'What HD really means is that the set replacement cycle will be pulled in. CRTs had a replacement cycle of nine years, but flatpanels and HD will accelerate that down to five years. That said, basically every TV we launch above 26in will be HD Ready. The broadcasters have said very clearly that buyers may not get the full viewing experience if they do not have the correct connectivity.'

Is it likely that Sony will cease production of CRT TVs any time soon?

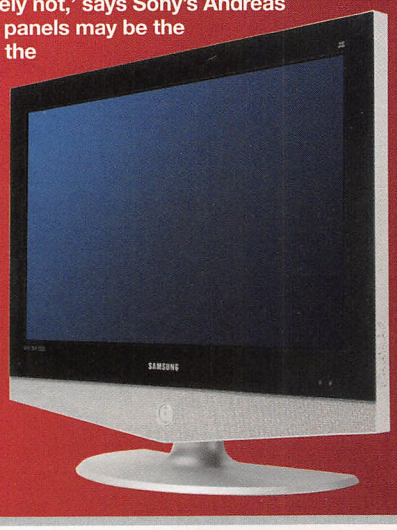
'As a corporation, we will not stop as long as there is a market. We may have closed our factories in Western Europe, as there is not a market in those territories. But Eastern Europe, South America – they will still be looking for low cost CRT TVs.'■

The biggest Qualia SXRD screen we can expect to see in Europe will be 60in and will cost £5k

SONY LOVES SAMSUNG?

It's a not a very well kept secret that Sony and Samsung LCD screens share panels. The two companies have a 50-50 joint venture LCD panel production facility in Korea and share the output. So does this mean the sets from each brand are basically the same?

'Absolutely not,' says Sony's Andreas Ditter. 'The panels may be the same – but the electronics are very different, and that is the most important thing.'



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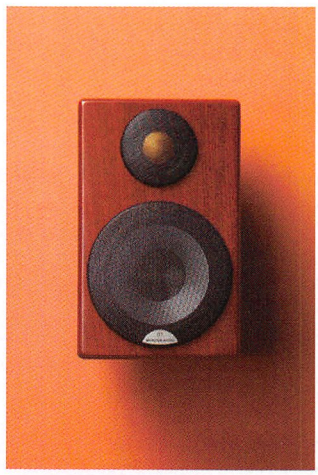

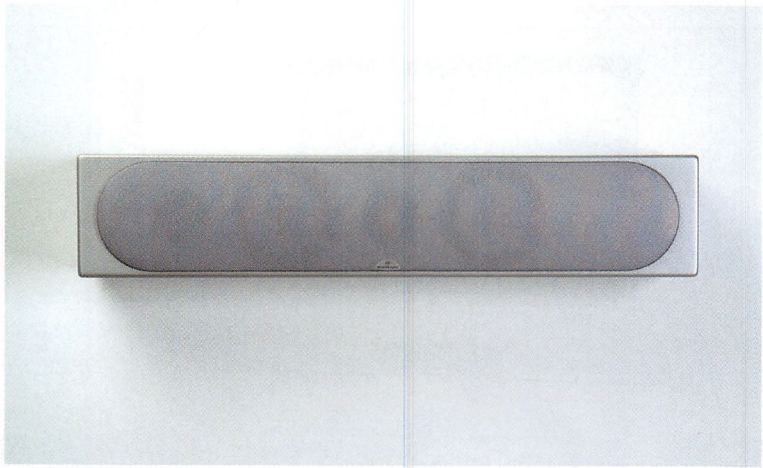

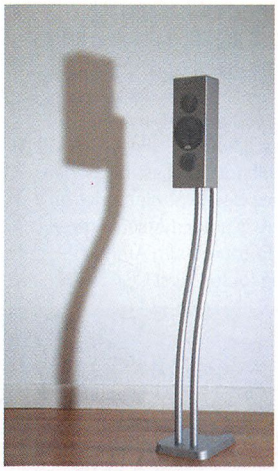

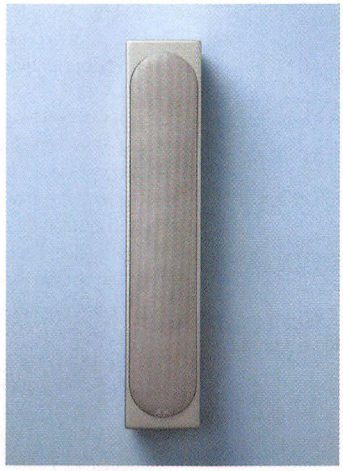

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The eventual triumph of digital recording over videotape is no longer in doubt and recorders such as the superb RDR-HXD910 from Sony should help administer the coup-de-grace to the VCR in a humane and clinical fashion.

The RDR-HXD910 is everything a modern recorder should be: versatile, highly specified and immensely capable, and all wrapped up in a shell that will look the business sat under your set for several years to come. In our review back in issue 299, we hailed it as 'a major advance in digital home entertainment', and we weren't kidding.

This combi deck packs a whopping hard-disk capacity of 250GB, which translates to a maximum recording time of around 430hr. Or, to look at it another way, that's roughly equivalent to watching one of the *Lord of the Rings* films about 143 times. And if you manage to exhaust that massive built-in capacity or feel like archiving favourite bits to disc, you have the luxury of choosing between every recordable format there is, except of course DVD-RAM and dual-layer DVD-R.

Upscaling technology capable of interlaced HD-quality video (1080i) gives you a taste of high-def from current, standard-resolution sources, meanwhile, and did we mention that it's got a Freeview tuner and an RGB Scart input? This means you'll be able to capture digital broadcasts in the highest possible quality, which sets it apart from many of the humdrum decks currently available.

There's plenty of other clever stuff under that sleek silver hood to ensure that performance is absolutely first rate. Our reviewer raved about the subtle and attractive colour palette during playback of recordings and pre-recorded DVDs and these qualities are enhanced with upscaled video.

All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning this superb recorder is answer the question and send it on a postcard to the usual address. Good luck

The Question

What does the 'i' in '1080i' stand for?

A) Interlaced

B) Interpolated

C) Interactive

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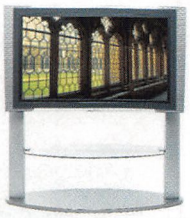

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- Digital Reality Creation
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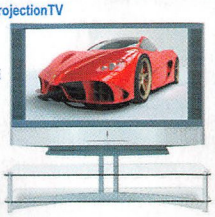

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- D-Matrix Noise Reduction
- DVD+R Double-Layer Disc Compatible

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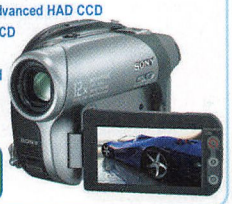

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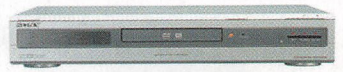

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- Pause Live TV
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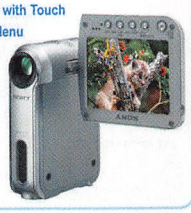

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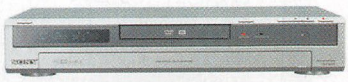

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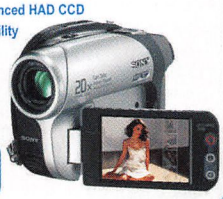

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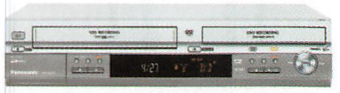

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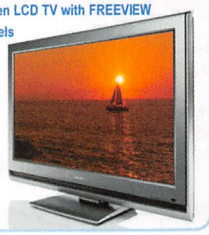

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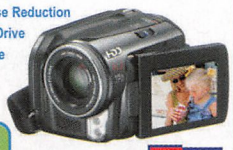

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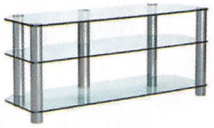

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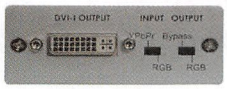

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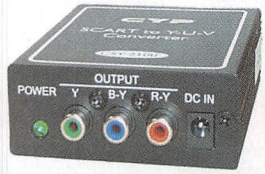

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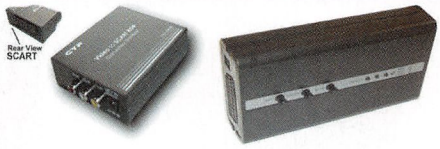

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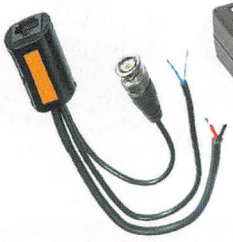

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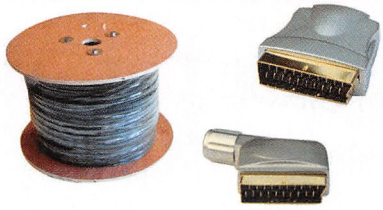

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Two comparably specified and similarly priced alternatives that we've tested and rated

FACT FILE
An at-a-glance guide to five of the product's most noteworthy features

DETAILS
FEATURES: A list of all the key functions the product has to offer
DISC PLAYBACK: (DVD players only) A list of every disc format accepted by the model in question
SOCKETS: Every input and output, with a bit of spec (eg RGB capability) where necessary
CONTACT: The manufacturer's consumer contact number for general enquiries and the company website or email address
TEST DATA: Objective measurements of AV kit performance from our unique Highbury Tech Labs facility

OTHER SECTIONS (not shown)
KEY CONNECTIONS: We point out the most interesting or unusual sockets, usually those that yield the highest possible performance
REMOTE: We mark the handset out of five for its looks, how the buttons are laid out and how well the buttons are labelled

28in CRT TV • Approx price: £430

On test

Also Consider >>

PHILIPS 28PW6618
Superior pictures at a similar price – but no picture frame design
Not yet reviewed

SONY KV-28HX15
Similar picture performance and slightly better sound thanks to a built-in subwoofer – but again, no picture frame design
Reviewed: Issue 292

Fact file
- 28in CRT TV
- 50Hz pictures
- Contrast booster
- Bass booster
- 1 RGB Scart

Toshiba 28Z44

Many of the traditional 'quality' brands are now trying to get a bit of the ultrabudget action, with Toshiba being the latest to give it a go with the £430 28Z44.

Surprisingly, the 28Z44's low price hasn't prevented Toshiba from gracing it with a variant of its hugely popular Picture Frame design, whereby the exceptionally skinny screen frame allows a 28in TV to occupy the same sort of space usually taken up by a 24in TV. The fact that this svelte bodywork also wears an eye-catching nearwhite colour doesn't do any harm either.

Connectivity is almost scarily basic, though. Toshiba has managed to ram in a pair of Scarts, but only one of these can take RGB, and there's no sign of other mainstream favourites like stereo audio outputs or a fourpin S-video jack.

At least the features list isn't quite so basic. Slightly unusual (for this money) touches include a contrast booster, a slightly bizarre facility for adjusting the picture's width, a multilevel bass booster and noise reduction.

performance

The really great news about the 28Z44, though, is the fact that its pictures are surprisingly enjoyable. Not in the sense that they excel in any particular department, but in that they manage to avoid practically all of the nasty stuff that usually characterises the ultra budget end of the market.

Take contrast, for instance. Where many really cheap – and even some mid-range – TVs fail to deliver anything like a deep black level, the 28Z44 goes really quite dark before the familiar grey mist sets in.

The picture is also surprisingly free of noise. Fine details are affected by impressively little moiring, edges are generally free of tizzing, ghosting or haloing, and of grain or dot crawl there's nary a trace.

Next, colours stay neatly contained within their proper boundaries, which helps the picture in general look a touch more sharp than that of many low-rent rivals.

There's really only one area where the 28Z44 betrays its cheap and cheerful position, and that's with its colour saturations. Compared with the similarly priced, similarly specified Philips 28PW6618 we looked at recently, the 28Z44's colours look a little muted and flat, so that the picture tends not to engross your eye so fully.

The 28Z44's sound is better than anticipated. The Picture Frame design requires the TV's speakers be tucked under the screen, but this doesn't prevent them sounding reasonably potent and the soundstage appearing decently wide. There's even a pretty solid amount of base to underpin proceedings. Yes, the mid-range can get overloaded and treble subtleties are conspicuous by their absence – but again, we have no complaints for the money.

As a total package, the 28Z44 is a very attractive proposition. To be fair, it's not the last word in performance quality – the Philips 28PW6618 delivers better pictures for the same sort of money, for instance. But don't forget the 28Z44's space-saving Picture Frame design or the fact that we've found it online for actually quite a bit less than its Philips rival.

John Archer

Details

FEATURES
28in 16:9 CRT TV; 50Hz pictures; autodegauss; blanket; noise reduction; black stretch; dynamic; sub bass; Spatial surround mode; volume corrections; on/off timers; horizontal position adjust; width adjust; panel lock; blue screen; multiple aspect ratios

SOCKETS
2 Scarts (1 RGB); RF jack; stereo audio input; composite video input; headphone jack

CONTACT
08704 424424
www.toshiba.co.uk

TEST DATA
For a full explanation of test data, please see page 124

Test	Rating
Colour	Average
Geometry	Good
Convergence	Good
Frequency response	Average

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD
Price; design; pictures

WHAT'S BAD
Colours slightly muted; minimal connectivity

Picture	★★★★☆
Sound	★★★★☆
Features	★★★★☆
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL VERDICT
A very decent budget performer given extra appeal by its space-saving design

★★★★☆

Issue 293 | What Video and Widescreen TV | 067

RATINGS (marks out of five)
WHAT'S GOOD: The highlights that might make you buy the product
WHAT'S BAD: Shortcomings, omissions and general grumbles
PICTURE: Arguably the most important bit, with all-round watchability taking top priority
SOUND: Fidelity and power are top considerations for TVs. With DVD players, it refers to analogue music performance, rather than digital audio piped to an amp
FEATURES: Is it packed with useful functions and tempting technology? We tell you here
EASE OF USE: This sums up how straightforward each product is to set up and use, and takes into account menu systems, graphical interfaces, plus general operational efficiency and convenience
VALUE: How much you get for your money – do the performance and features justify the price tag?

OVERALL VERDICT
A capsule conclusion: a general appraisal of what you see before you and an overall mark out of five

Pioneer DVR-930H

Ian Calcutt tries to spot the difference between Pioneer's latest DVD recorder and its predecessor

Things move so quickly in consumer electronics that new models must arrive each year to keep the brand fresh, or at least to make it seem that way. We were impressed by Pioneer's flagship DVR-920H 12 months ago and now its replacement has arrived. In the mean time the Japanese company added a wealth of features and improvements to its mid-range DVD recorders, such as the DVR-630H. So what's new in the DVR-930H compared to the old model? Apart from hard drive size, the surprising answer is... not much.

looks & features

The headline feature is that the hard-disk drive (HDD) has been increased from 250GB to a hefty 400GB. It's a capable combined HDD-DVD recorder with a glossy look and weighty build but it seems frozen in time from late 2004. Connections are good with twin RGB/S-video Scarts and HDMI digital AV output as well as a two-way i.Link port for recording to or from a digital camcorder.

As with other current Pioneers, GuidePlus provides free onscreen listings and set-top box control for whatever channel line-up you receive. This makes setting the timer much easier and gives proper programme names on your recordings automatically.

However, a few things strike us about the 930H in comparison to Pioneer's 2005-2006 range. The DVR-530H and 630H have new MPEG encoders to increase capacity on HDD and DVD. They play DVD-RAM, burn to dual-layered DVD-R and add an HDD-only XP+ mode for immensely high quality 15Mbps recordings. They also have a CD jukebox feature to store your CD collection on HDD and extremely convenient multitasking that enables you to edit or dub titles even while recording something else to HDD. None of these additions appear on the DVR-930H, effectively making it the same as last year's flagship with just a larger hard drive.

> "Charging double for slightly better picture quality but fewer features is a tall order"

For the uninitiated, the basic features are above average, with a host of editing options on HDD and fast dubbing to DVD-R or DVD-RW. The recorder supports DVD-RW Video mode for compatibility in other players or VR mode, which allows more editing.

ease of use

Once again, the onscreen menu is the older version of Pioneer's user interface rather than the improved 2005 edition. This forerunner is not so bad but it lacks the recent recorders' list-view option. This is an alternative to the thumbnail-driven menu of recordings, which helps when you have dozens of programmes on the hard drive to navigate through. Given the 400GB capacity, that's anything from 86hr to 700hr worth!

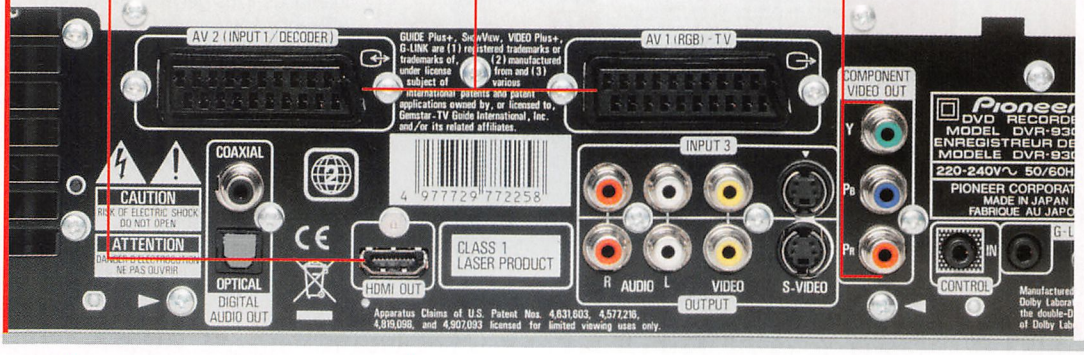
The DVR-930H has very fast high-speed copy times, plus the useful Disc Backup feature, where you can make copies of a home-recorded disc by putting the content back on the hard drive in one simple process. The machine is relatively sluggish in trick-play mode, though, with a noticeable delay coming out of fast search or chapter skip. However, the recorder reinstates the handy chapter-marking and

Key connections

HDMI
For a direct digital link to compatible flatscreen TVs and projectors

Dual Scarts
RGB and S-video in or out for good quality recording or display

Component video out
Component video out offers high-quality progressive scan playback



Details

FEATURES

Recording formats: 5/32 manual steps
Recording modes: 5 presets
Max. recording time: 700hr (HDD), 8hr (DVD)
Non-linear editing: Yes
TV tuner: Analogue terrestrial
Timer: 32-event/one month
Guide Plus/Video Plus: Yes/Yes
Set-top box control: Yes
Dimensions; 420(w) x 87(h) x 357(d)mm
Weight; 7.9kg
Other features: Fast dubbing up to x54; disc back-up; playlist editing on DVD-RW (VR mode); PAL/NTSC recording & progressive scan playback; CPRM compatible

DISC PLAYBACK

DVD-Video, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW, DualDiscCD, CD, CD-R, CD-RW, VCD, SVCD, MP3, JPEG, WMA

SOCKETS

DV-in/out; composite & S-video in; stereo line in (phonos); 2x Scarts (composite, RGB, S-video in/out); component video output (phonos); composite & S-video in/out; RF aerial in/out; stereo line in/out (phonos); optical & electrical digital audio out; G-Link out (set-top box control)

CONTACT

01753 789500
www.pioneer.co.uk

TEST DATA

For a full explanation of test data, please see page 116

RECORDING

Test	Reading	Rating
Chroma AM	-61.2dB	excellent
Chroma PM	-58.8dB	very good
Frequency response		
Fine @ 4MHz	-0.35dB	very good
SP@ 4MHz	-0.35dB	very good
LP@ 2MHz	-0.37dB	very good
EP@ 2MHz	-0.35dB	very good
SLP@ 2MHz	-0.37dB	very good

Also Consider >>

SONY RDR-HXD910
A 250GB hard drive/DVD recorder with built in Freeview, HDMI and stunning pseudo-HD picture.
Reviewed: Issue 299

PANASONIC DMR-EH60D
A powerful 200GB hard drive/ DVD recorder that makes timer setting easy and delivers a terrific picture.
Reviewed: Issue 300

Very similar styling to the 920H, but looks like it means business

Remote

Pioneer sticks with its plain but very well laid out handset

Looks ★★★★★
Layout ★★★★★
Labelling ★★★★★

thumbnail frame-grabbing buttons on the remote, which are missing on the 530/630H models.

GuidePlus delivers free onscreen listings that are a boon for anyone used to manual timer entry or old-style VideoPlus, but it's less sophisticated than Sky+ or TiVo.

While GuidePlus sets the timer (and the G-Link remote control extender changes channel on your Freeview, Sky or cable box) the DVR-930H really should have a built-in Freeview tuner, like certain Sony and Panasonic recorders. This is another area where Pioneer appears to have slipped behind. For the money, we'd also have expected an Ethernet network link and MPEG4 support for playing DiVX video files or transferring to portable media players. No such luck this time.

Fact file

- 400GB HDD (max 700hr)
- DVD-RW/-R recording
- Up to x54 high speed copy
- Simultaneous play/record/dub
- CD-R/RW/MP3/WMA/JPEG playback
- GuidePlus EPG

performance

Weighing in just under 8kg, this chunky recorder contains a wealth of AV technology. Thanks to the 108MHz/14-bit video DAC and HDMI, its clean-looking picture is a league ahead of the cheaper (though still very good) DVR-630H but it makes less efficient use of its hard drive and there's little to tell it apart from its 920H predecessor.

For example, the DVR-630H has a 250GB drive and fits up to 711hr on HDD – or 13hr on DVD – in the maximum capacity recording mode. The new recorder also manages about 700hr on HDD but only because the disk has been nearly doubled to 400GB. The compression techniques are still inherited from the previous-generation DVR-920H.

Nevertheless, the picture quality remains worthy of our five-star rating in the upper modes (Fine and SP), or at any manual setting above 2hr 30min. The HDMI output assists in how detailed and colourful the 576-line progressive scan picture looks, too, but there's no upscaling of the video output to 720p (or 1080 interlaced lines). You can achieve this with the £700 Sony RDR-HXD910, so its picture performance is not as spectacular as its rival.

The LP (4hr on DVD) mode is softer than the comparable modes on the Pioneer DVR-630H and current recorders from the likes of Panasonic and JVC. Needless to say, the lowest quality/highest capacity options of SLP (6hr on DVD) and EP (8hr) are blurred and show break-up when scenes get fast moving.

Ideally, stick to Fine and SP options and partner it with a progressive scan TV via component or HDMI. The latter makes colours deeper and detail becomes almost three-dimensional. The same applies to commercial DVDs, with *Batman Begins* losing its inherent grain to look pristine. You can connect via optical or electrical digital audio outputs and, as with the earlier DVR-920H, the sound quality is top notch, though not necessarily much better than more affordable alternatives.

conclusion

Pioneer was among the first manufacturer of DVD players and recorders to add HDMI digital output – an ideal match for its plasmas. With more brands doing the same this year at lower prices, the DVR-930H doesn't have so much going for it, despite being a decent digital recorder fundamentally.

Its DVR-630H stablemate now costs less than £450, so charging double for slightly better picture quality but fewer features is a tall order. The Sony RDR-HXD910 is edging below its original £700 price tag and that includes both a Freeview tuner and upscaling via HDMI to 720p/1080i. The Pioneer only manages 576p through component and HDMI and lacks built-in Freeview.

A lot has changed in a year. Pioneer needs to do more than slotting in a new hard drive to justify the premium price. It's a fine machine but as a flagship it's already rather rusty ■

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD
HDMI out; big HDD; GuidePlus; recording & playback quality; editing

WHAT'S BAD
Price; no built-in Freeview tuner; lacks features found in other Pioneer recorders; no MPEG4/DiVX/network support

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Features	★★★★½
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★½

OVERALL VERDICT
Comparatively lacking the features of cheaper rivals, this good recorder is not quite as good as it should be

★★★★½

DVD recorder/VCR combi ● Approx price: £220

Toshiba D-VR15

An affordable VCR/DVD combi to ease you through the digital transition but does it impress Ian Calcutt?

Toshiba's recent ad campaign revived its famous 'ello Tosh catch-phrase from the 1980s and there's another throwback to that era in its new DVD recorder – there's a video cassette deck inside too.

VCR combis keep coming because so many tapes are still in circulation, some with irreplaceable recordings, so why not archive them on smaller, more durable discs for posterity? This machine is the latest to make the transfer process simple.

looks & features

There's nothing amazingly special about the D-VR15's appearance. Anything with a built-in VCR cannot be as slim as digital-only recorders.

There are some heavily featured combis, including Panasonic's DMR-EH80V VHS/DVD/hard drive recorder but the D-VR15 can't compete with their multimedia credentials – mainly because it has no hard-disk drive. This means that you have to get your DVD recordings as perfect as you can first time, especially if you choose DVD-RW in the more player-friendly Video mode or DVD-R. Alternatively you can use DVD-RAM or DVD-RW in VR mode and make extensive edits after recording but the downside is that few players will accept these discs. With a hard drive you can make edits first and then copy to your choice of DVD, but a lack of HDD keeps copy functions simple and the price down.

There are few frills, such as fancy digital tuners or GuidePlus programme listings. For TV recording you only have an analogue tuner and timer setting is manual, without even VideoPlus to help you. There's a similarly stripped down approach to the sockets. The TV Scart offers high-quality RGB output for viewing but if you want to attach a Freeview, Sky or cable box via Scart, you'll only get low calibre composite video as the Scart input lacks both RGB and S-video in. The only decent option is the separate S-video input, which is actually at the front (primarily aimed at temporary connections to camcorders) and therefore unattractive as a permanent link.

> "You can 'timeslip' a recording by starting to play it before the recording has finished"

ease of use

Toshiba's digital recorders have been something of a nightmare in the past when it came to the remote control and onscreen user interface. This one is much clearer throughout, probably because it seems to be a repurposed Samsung underneath the Toshiba-branded exterior. One niggle, however, is that the machine is often unresponsive unless you sit square-on with your remote control.

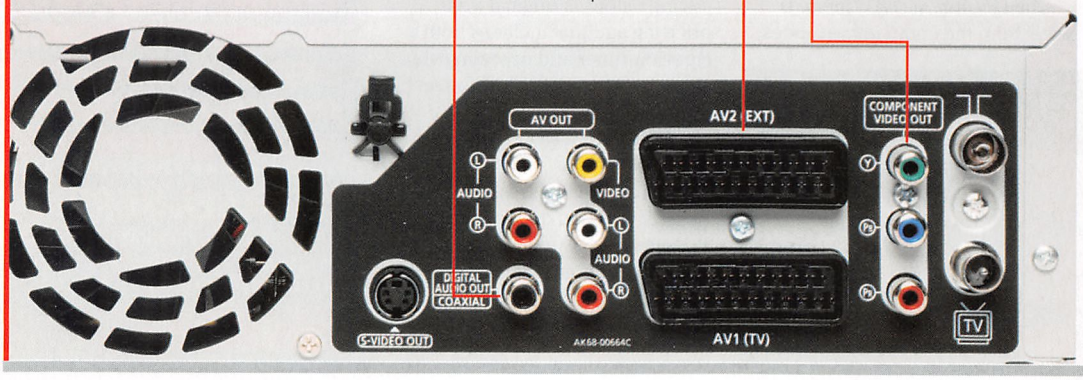
Setting up is reasonably straightforward, though some default settings aren't quite right for typical use, especially digital audio output. The maximum capacity on one side of a DVD is 8hr in EP mode, though you can rein this in to a slightly better looking 6hr by altering its set-up. There is no dual-layer DVD-R support and though it will take double-sided DVD-RAM, it won't load cartridge versions. A benefit of using RAM here is that you can 'timeslip' a current recording by starting to play it before the recording has finished. As mentioned, timer setting is manual only, but there's PDC for

Key connections

Electrical digital audio out
For DVD 5.1 digital audio on a surround sound system

Dual Scarts
RGB out for good quality viewing but no RGB or S-video input!

Component video output
The best analogue video connection for DVD playback



Details

FEATURES

Recording formats: DVD-RAM/-RW/-R
Recording modes: 4 (DVD), 2 (VHS)
Max. recording time: 8hr (DVD), 16hr (2-sided DVD-RAM), 10hr (E300 VHS)
Non-linear editing: Yes
TV tuner: Analogue
Timer: 12-event/one month
Guide Plus/Video Plus: No/No
Set-top box control: No
Dimensions: 430(w) x 84(h) x 321(d)mm
Weight: 4.8kg
Other features: Play List editing on DVD-RAM/DVD-RW (VR mode); PAL progressive scan playback; DVD bookmarks; multibrand TV remote functions; CPRM compatible

DISC PLAYBACK

DVD, DVD-R/-RW, DVD-RAM, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW, DualDisc, CD, VCD, MP3, JPEG

SOCKETS

Composite & S-video in; stereo line in (phonos); 2x Scarts (1x composite, RGB out, 1x composite in); component video output (phonos); composite & S-video out; RF aerial in/out; 2x stereo line out (phonos); electrical digital audio out

CONTACT

08704 424 424
www.home-entertainment.toshiba.co.uk

TEST DATA

For a full explanation of test data, please see page 116

DVD RECORDING

Test	Reading	Rating
Chroma AM	-56.5dB	good
Chroma PM	-58.3dB	very good
Frequency response		
XP @ 4MHz	0.08dB	excellent
SP @ 4MHz	0.08dB	excellent
LP @ 2MHz	-2.14dB	average
EP @ 2MHz	-2.14dB	average

Also Consider >>

PANASONIC DMR-EH80V
Sophisticated but convenient, this four-in-one combi handles just about every recording format.
Reviewed: Issue 299

JVC DR-MX1
Impressive DVD recorder with HDD, VCR and progressive scan output but no RGB input.
Reviewed: Issue 291

The Toshiba is about as pretty as it gets with DVD/VCR combis

Remote

Closely modelled on Samsung remotes and easy to use

Looks ★★★★★
Layout ★★★★★
Labelling ★★★★★

more accurate start-stop times on terrestrial aerial recordings.

This dual-deck machine also lets you record on VHS while playing a DVD or vice versa. You can also record on both at once – including different inputs – but not two different channels as there's only one tuner. The copy functions also work both ways, within reason. You can mark start and end positions on a tape for transferring to DVD, which is useful for multiple programmes, but it's tricky to use and not ideal for long recordings. The one-touch dubbing feature is fine but the machine tends to reject cassettes if there is slight tape damage.

Fact file

- DVD-RAM/DVD-RW/-R (max 8hr)
- Record to or from VHS and DVD or dual record
- Simultaneous play/record (DVD-RAM)
- CD-R/RW, MP3/JPEG playback
- PAL progressive scan

performance

There are just four DVD recording modes on offer, providing the usual maximum durations of 1hr, 2hr, 4hr, 6hr or 8hr per disc. The highest quality (XP) mode is crisp and noise free providing that you use the front S-video input and a clean source. It handles motion and detail with ease and colours remain true to life, although you amass no more than 1hr at this quality. The SP (2hr) option keeps the vibrant hues and contrast but detail is slightly softer and you'll start to see digital noise in smooth contours, or around captions and sharp outlines, but it's acceptable for general use.

There is no user-specified mode to tailor more specific running times, so the next quality level (LP) jumps all the way to 4hr capacity. At this quality the detail is considerably less sharp and sudden fast movement will cause the telltale digital 'mosaic effect'. Should you require more than 2hr on a disc (given average movie running times this is something that's likely to be used often) then this disappointing mode is the best you'll get. If you are used to VHS or only recording off aerial then you may not notice the softness so much, but we've seen better LP results with other big-brand recorders, such as JVC, Pioneer and Panasonic's current ranges.

It almost goes without saying that the EP mode delivers the lowest quality results, with all of the side-effects we've already mentioned becoming increasingly more obvious as capacity increases to 6hr or 8hr (depending on your chosen setting). Again, we've seen better handling of EP-mode quality elsewhere.

DVD movie playback fares better, with progressive scan being the best option. Colour and contrast are again strong though detail is less crisp than typical DVD players and the digital audio has a rather dull feel to it.

VHS recording is limited to two modes – SP and LP – neither of which are up to much. SP recordings exhibit dot crawl around bold outlines while saturated colours reveal unstable looking break-up. The same applies to LP only with worse definition and stability. If copying VHS to DVD, then the disc-recorded version will look slightly better.

conclusion

This halfway-house between tape and disc doesn't really show off the best features of either format. Despite recording to three types of DVD, the editing options are rather limited due to the lack of a hard drive, particularly if you require discs that will work in any player. The connections are similarly minimal. With its lack of RGB input or a conveniently placed S-video socket, you can't get good digibox recordings. Ease of use and progressive scan playback are its better points and, admittedly, the price is low for a combi but there are so many missing frills such as VideoPlus that you are better off spending a little more on a superior model ■

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD
Multiformat DVD recording; simple copying to or from VHS; price

WHAT'S BAD
No RGB or S-video in via Scart; recorded picture quality; no Freeview, GuidePlus/VideoPlus; no hard drive

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL VERDICT

A cheap and easy-to-use combi but inputs are limited and recorded picture quality is mediocre on both VHS and DVD

★★★★★

Twin-tuner Freeview PVR • Approx price: **£240**

Humax PVR-9200T

Humax builds on its set-top box reputation with a dual-tuner PVR. Ian Calcutt sees if it's worth the wait

Korea-based Humax has a strong presence in the UK and assembles one of the best Freeview boxes, the F2-FOX-T, in its Northern Ireland factory. It's had a rockier ride with hard disk-based personal video recorders. Its PVR-8000T suffered by having only one digital tuner. It also locked up all functions while recording, so you couldn't even watch a previous recording at the same time, breaking a fundamental rule of PVRs. Many of those issues have been addressed in the long-awaited PVR-9200T, which adds a second tuner, pay-TV access and USB connectivity.

looks & features

You wouldn't think this 'Duovision' recorder can do much from its standard silver styling, mirrored front and minimalist control buttons but inside lies an ample 160GB hard disk, which is good value for the price and enables you to store up to 100hrs of TV (or even more digital radio). There's also a live TV buffer for rewinding the currently viewed channel up to about 2hrs, though if you hit record you cannot 'capture' this as part of a proper recording.

There are decent connections including analogue and digital audio outputs, and a modulated RF aerial output so you can use the PVR on non-Scart TVs or via distribution systems. Unlike many dual-tuner PVRs, this one has a single aerial input, which makes the initial set-up simple.

You can slot a Top Up TV smartcard into the front, under a flap and inside a CAM (conditional access module), so you can receive extra pay-TV channels on top of the Freeview line-up, such as Discovery, UK Gold, EuroSport and Cartoon Network. Alongside it is a USB port, which you can connect to a PC and use the supplied Media e-linker software to load digital photos and MP3 audio files or output recorded programmes to the PC for editing and copying to DVD. You'll need to be familiar with video encoding, editing and disc creation and a well-specced Windows PC for this.

> "The ability to view a third channel during dual recording is an unexpected bonus"

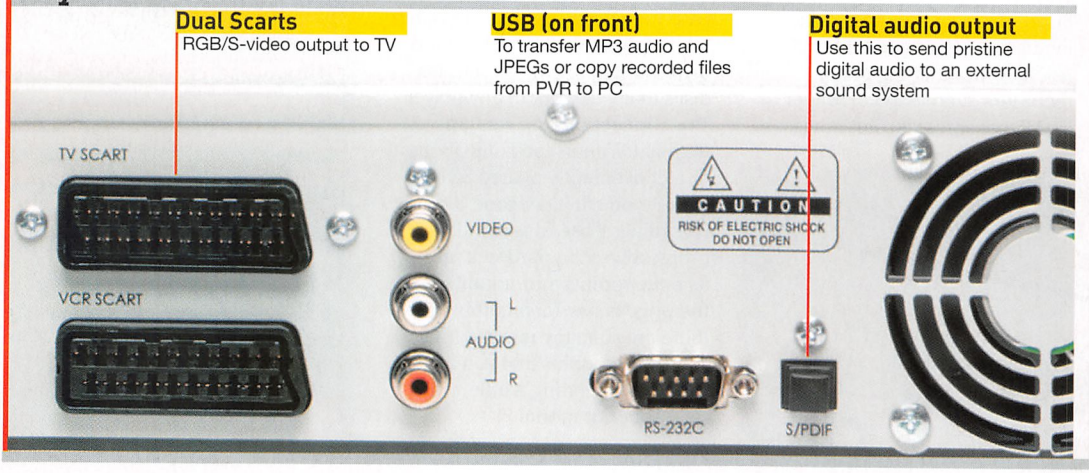
You can record two channels at once with the 9200T – which is helpful for overlapping programmes – and even view a third channel under certain circumstances, ie whether that channel sits in the same 'multiplex' block as one of your recorded channels. With the much improved line-up on Freeview, including More4, ITV4 and Sky 3 recently joining, you are much more likely to find programmes that clash in the schedules, so a twin-tuner PVR like this can help. You can also keep an eye on any two channels at once with the picture-in-picture feature, though this is unavailable during playback or recording.

Other features include being able to bookmark points in a recording, or basic editing to chop out unwanted sections. Channels can also be grouped into favourites. There is an instant replay button and forward skip for jumping quickly through commercial breaks.

ease of use

The onscreen graphics are smart, with a playback status bar that looks a lot like TiVo's, which is never a bad thing. In contrast to Humax's disappointing PVR-equipped TVs, these onscreen graphics can be

Key connections



Details

FEATURES

Hard-disk capacity: 160GB
Recording modes: 1
Max. recording time: 100hrs approx
Non-linear editing: Partial erase/divide
TV tuner: 2x digital terrestrial
Dimensions: 380(w) x 78(h) x 281(d)mm
Weight: 3.7kg
Other features: 7-day TV guide; pause live broadcast (max approx 120 min); simultaneous play and record (except current programmes); record two channels while watching another (in same multiplex); picture-in-picture; modulated RF output; MP3, JPEG and MPEG AV file transfer

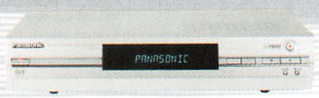
SOCKETS

RF aerial in/out; 2x Scart (1x RGB/composite/S-video out; 1x composite/S-video out); optical digital audio out; analogue stereo audio out (phonos); composite video out; RS232 serial port; USB 2.0; CAM slot

CONTACT

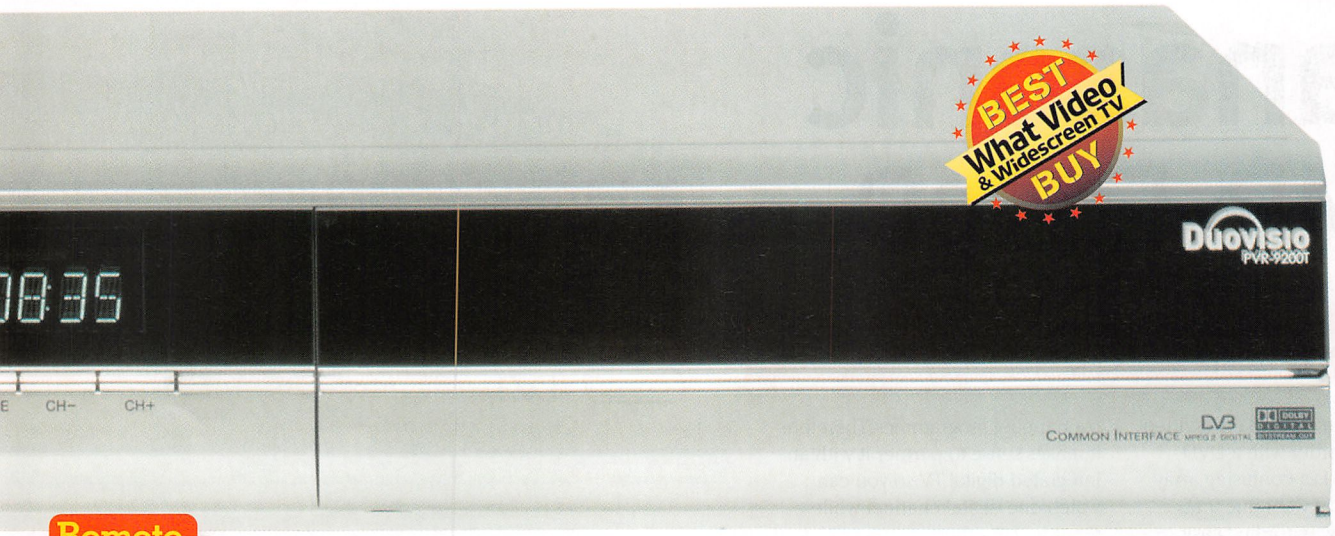
020 8547 4240
www.humaxdigital.co.uk

Also Consider >>



PANASONIC TU-CTH100
A big-name twin-tuner PVR with 80GB hard drive, good connectivity and decent ease of use. Reviewed: Issue 298

TOPFIELD TF5800
One of the best PVRs with its 160GB capacity, upgradable software and Top Up TV capability. Reviewed: Issue 298



Remote

Beautifully made, like a snazzy mobile phone, but the sliding flap covers some useful buttons.

Looks ★★★★★
Layout ★★★★★
Labelling ★★★★★

made to go away, except for annoying and plasma-harmful 'red button' interactive icons. There are four fast picture search options up to 64x as well as a convenient way of hopping much further back or forward (without visual search) by moving a cursor along the status bar. There's also a useful resume play facility in case you interrupt playback while watching something.

The main drawback compared to most PVRs is that you cannot start watching a current recording until the programme has finished. You can, however, see another channel or play previous recordings from the hard disk – a big improvement on Humax's earlier model.

It is easy to set the timer with the seven-day electronic programme guide (EPG) and you can get a quick view of recorded programmes with the Playlist button, though it is placed inconveniently under the sliding flap on the remote, along with the instant replay and commercial skip buttons, all of which could be better placed.

The EPG includes a useful programme name or genre search, plus manual timer setting as a back-up. You can specify regular slots for daily or weekly recordings, but as with most other Freeview PVRs, it doesn't cope with late schedule changes as effectively as Sky+. There is no automatic padding to contend with programme overruns either, and though you can manually adjust, it's quite tricky to do and easy to overlook. There's no copy function for groups of programmes too, so if you want to output programmes to a DVD recorder, you must do them one at a time manually.

Fact file

- 160GB HDD
- Twin Freeview tuners
- 7-day programme guide
- Simultaneous play and record
- Top Up TV compatible

performance

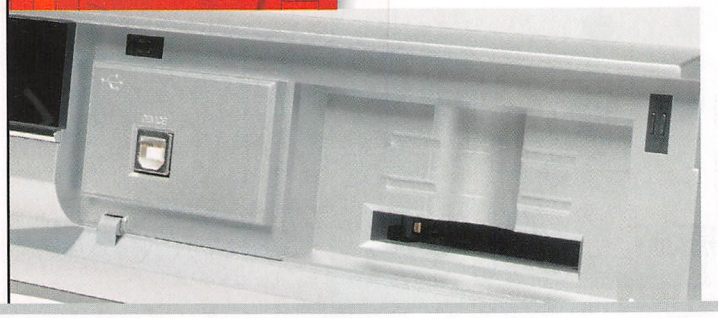
This PVR is fast when changing channels, using the EPG, going into digital text or navigating the playlist menus. The editing functions are potentially useful for chopping out advertisements or unwanted parts of a recording but there's considerable audio-visual break-up at the edit point, so if you want polished results, use an external hard drive-DVD recorder combi along with the Humax. However, trick play functions are smooth and glitch-free when returning to normal playback and the generally superb remote control truly comes into its own in day-to-day viewing.

A vast improvement on its predecessor, the Humax is one of the better Freeview PVRs available

The overall digital TV reception is very good. Viewing via RGB Scart, the detail is clear and colours are as powerful as any comparable digital video recorder. There is some occasional blockiness in smooth contours or fast motion, though this is equally down to the quality of the broadcast of individual channels. The tuner is sensitive and good at reaching channels that some digital TV receivers cannot if your aerial signal is not too strong. For instance, the new-look widescreen *Sky News* looks particularly impressive via the Humax, as do the swooping camera shots and vibrant lighting of BBC2's *Later With Jools Holland*.

conclusion

The PVR-9200T makes up for most of the drawbacks of the previous PVR-8000T. The two tuners make all the difference, while the ability to view a third channel during dual recording is an unexpected bonus. Overall, it's good value, with a decent-sized hard drive and admirable connectivity, including RF out, two audio outputs for radio listening, the Top Up TV compatible slot and a USB port for exchanging multimedia files. Ease of use, thanks in part to the excellent remote, is among the best Freeview PVRs. Only the lack of 'chasing playback' for unfinished recordings lets it down but the Humax makes up for it in other ways ■



Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD
HDD capacity; twin Freeview tuners; picture quality; fast response; pay-TV & MP3 compatible

WHAT'S BAD
No 'chase play' of current recordings; glitchy editing; Media e-linker software for Windows PCs only

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Features	★★★★½
Ease of use	★★★★½
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL VERDICT
A major improvement on Humax's previous Freeview PVR, with dual recording, and better features

★★★★★

Panasonic DMR-ES20D

As Freeview channels grow, so do recorders with digital tuners. Ian Calcutt looks at Panasonic's latest combi

If you are going to replace a video cassette recorder with a DVD recorder there is a confusing array of options. If you want one that makes Freeview recording easy, however, the field narrows to a handful, including Panasonic's DMR-ES20D. Basically it's a stripped down version of the DMR-EH60D hard-drive combi reviewed back in Issue 300. Without a built-in hard drive there's less that it can do, but for light users on a moderate budget you still get decent features and good picture quality.

looks & features

Like its Freeview-equipped EH60D counterpart, the ES20D saves you shelf space by having its digital tuner inside a slim frame no bigger than other DVD recorders. There is an analogue tuner too, because some Freeview channels can vanish in fringe reception areas. Freeview's entertainment channel line-up is increasing with new arrivals such as ITV4, More4 and Sky 3. There is only one digital tuner, though, so this recorder cannot deal with overlapping programmes. Therefore it makes sense to partner it with an integrated digital TV so you can watch one digital channel while recording another.

As a multiformat recorder, one advantage is that you can choose between DVD-R or DVD+R for recordings you want to keep, or DVD-RW and DVD-RAM for reusable discs. DVD-RAM lets you watch another part of any current recording or something else on the same disc, giving you a sense of the features that hard drive recorders provide. You can significantly re-edit DVD-RAM recordings – including erasing sections or dividing programmes – but these discs are not normally viewable in other decks. The other recording formats can be more compatible but they have no editing options on the Panasonic and, without a hard drive, you are stuck with how the recording was at the time, with no possibility to edit out adverts. As a single-drive machine you also can't make any recordings while watching a movie on DVD or playing a CD.

> "Freeview recorders are still in their infancy but already this is one of the best"

ease of use

The big benefit of having Freeview built-in is the accompanying electronic programme guide (EPG) that gives you free seven-day TV listings and simple timer setting. Your recordings are also labelled helpfully with the correct programme name. Like its DMR-EH60D sibling, however, the machine does not let you access editing features or the EPG while recording and there are no clever Sky+ or TiVo-style features that automatically record subsequent episodes of a series, though you can manually specify recurring recordings for a given timeslot. It's much easier than normal timer setting or VideoPlus – although those are provided in case the Freeview route is not suitable.

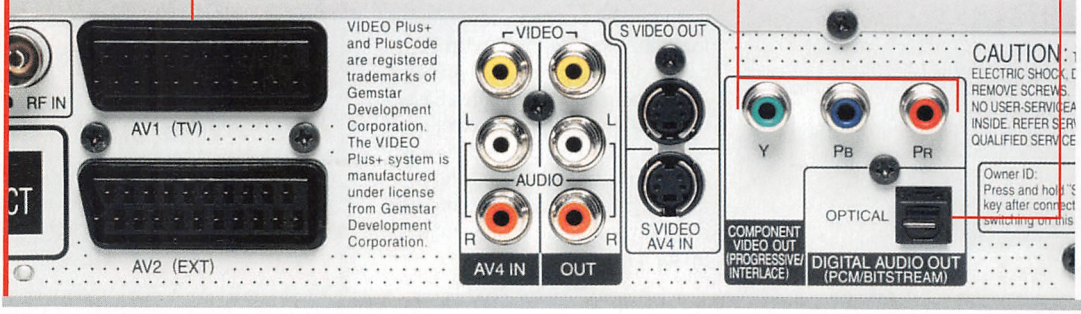
As this is not a hard-drive equipped model, there is no rolling buffer to pause or 'rewind' live TV but the recorder is quick to react when you press Record if a DVD-RAM is loaded in the disc tray. The other advantage of using RAM discs is that if you delete parts of a disc, all free space is made available for continuous new recordings. For

Key connections

Dual Scarts
RGB and S-video in and out

Component video out
For progressive scan playback on compatible displays

Digital audio output
Optical digital output for surround sound amps



Details

FEATURES

Recording modes: 4
Max. recording time: 8hr (DVD), 16hr (2-sided DVD RAM)
Non-linear editing: Yes (DVD-RAM)
TV tuner: digital/analogue terrestrial
Timer: 16-event/one month
Freeview EPG: Yes
Set-top box control: Ext link slave mode
Dimensions: 430(w) x 63(h) x 351(d)mm; Weight: 3.5kg
Other features: Quick-start EPG and DVD-RAM; PAL/NTSC recording prog scan playback; simultaneous play and record & playlist editing (DVD-RAM); flexible recording mode

DISC PLAYBACK

DVD, DVD-R/-RW (video/VR), CD-R/-RW; DVD+R/+RW, DVD+R dual layer, CD, VCD, SVCD, MP3, JPEG, 2-channel DVD-A, Dual disc CD/DVD

SOCKETS

RF aerial in/out; 2 Scarts (RGB/S-video/composite in/out); component video out (phonos); composite/S-video out; 2 composite/S-video in; 2 analogue stereo audio in (phonos); optical digital audio out; analogue stereo audio out (phonos)

CONTACT

08705 357357
www.panasonic.co.uk

TEST DATA

For a full explanation of test data, please see page 116

RECORDING

Test	Reading	Rating
Chroma AM	-66.3dB	Excellent
Chroma PM	-58.5dB	Very good
Frequency response		
XP @ 4MHz	-0.8dB	Very good
SP @ 4MHz	-0.8dB	Very good
LP @ 4MHz	-0.9dB	Very good
LP @ 2MHz	-0.1dB	Very good
EP @ 2MHZ	-1.3dB	Very good

Also Consider >>

SONY RDR-GXD500
Classy DVD recorder with built-in Freeview, dual-format disc recording and component output but no HDMI. Reviewed: Jan '05

TOPFIELD TF5800
Though new, it's already one of the best with its 160GB capacity and upgradeable software but no DVD drive though. Reviewed: Issue 298

Perfectly suited for the occasional user on a budget

Remote

Well laid-out and user-friendly though the scroll-wheel could me more solid

Looks ★★★★★
Layout ★★★★★
Labelling ★★★★★

example, if you delete two non-consecutive half hour programmes you can make one new 60min recording of the same quality (or lower).

Recording from external sources such as a Sky or cable box is also possible. One Scart input is switchable between S-video or higher quality RGB, but there is no i.Link connection for DV camcorders. Playback is well supported for the price, with a choice of S-video, RGB Scart or component video – with or without progressive scan for plasma, LCD or projector owners.

performance

The combination of Freeview tuner and DVD recorder are a perfect match. Colours gleam with purity and brightness and details are rich and deep with little of the digital break-up or noise that sometimes afflicts digital TV recordings. Even though there may be natural grain as part of the picture, especially if a programme is shot on celluloid, it's more of a part of the image than messy interference. Live studio material arrives looking pristine as there's no analogue conversion between the camera lens and the Panasonic's receiver – until you output to TV – but sadly there's no HDMI digital video output to further improve this final stage.

XP is the top-calibre mode for putting an hour of recordings on a standard DVD. This does not introduce any of its own noticeable digital compression side-effects – for instance blocking in smooth contours or break-up with fast motion such as fire or running water. An hour's capacity is not too handy, however the SP mode is perfectly suitable for general use, forming a decent balance between giving 2hr of running time with not much reduction in quality. The LP option jumps to 4hr, stepping down the recording quality as it does so but the overall performance is surprisingly good, particularly when recording directly from Freeview.

The lowest mode, EP, is switchable between 6hr or 8hr running times. Neither option is great for sharp pictures but they are acceptable for non-essential recordings. A flexible (FR) mode means you can specify more precise durations to fit programmes on disc at the best available quality.

The progressive scan output for flat-screen TVs and projectors gives a slightly clearer image than RGB Scart, particularly with films, so your DVD collection should look respectable. High-resolution digital movies such as *Sin City* look especially impressive. Standard TV fares less well due to the machine's rather lacklustre progressive scan conversion but the noise reduction mode helps somewhat. Digital audio playback is adequate but compared to more expensive models it has a rather dull edge that occasionally lapses into harshness with vocals.

Fact file

- Digital and analogue terrestrial tuners
- DVD-RAM, DVD-RW, DVD-R, DVD+R compatible
- Simultaneous play and record
- PAL/NTSC progressive scan

conclusion

The DMR-ES20D is best suited for those that make occasional recordings and want access to Freeview and DVD playback without a pile of hardware under the TV. This model is a different proposition to sophisticated, large-capacity hard-drive combis for well-heeled TV addicts but given what it can do, it's a fine recorder.

Of course, there is always room for improvement. In the next generation we would like to see Panasonic add VR-mode support for DVD-RW, the ability to record on new dual-layered blanks and perhaps a subscription card slot for Top-Up TV, although as the free channels increase, this becomes less of an issue. Freeview-ready digital recorders are still in their infancy but already this is becoming one of the best of the more affordable choices ■

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD
Built-in Freeview and EPG; multi-format disc recording; digital picture

WHAT'S BAD
One Freeview tuner; no editing or EPG when recording; editing on DVD-RAM only

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★½
Features	★★★★½
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL VERDICT
A convenient way to play or record DVDs along with great picture quality from built-in Freeview tuner

★★★★★

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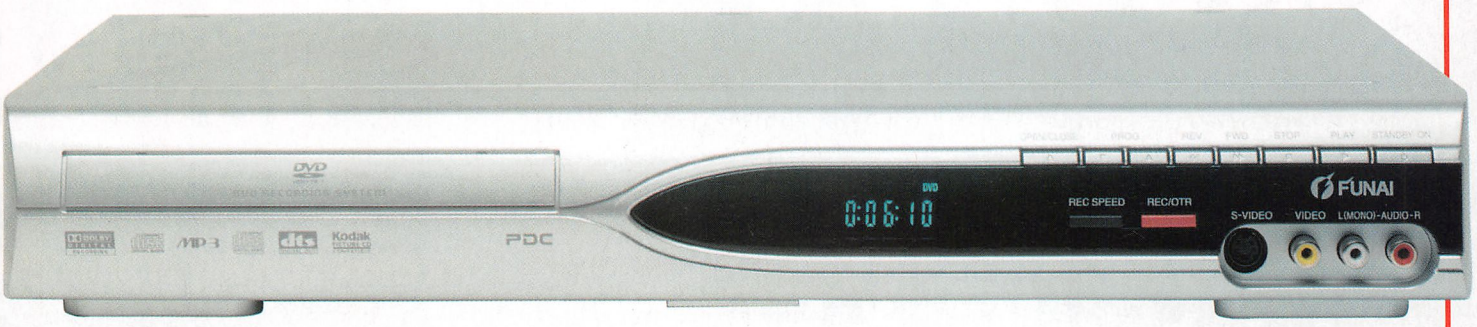

Funai DR-B2737

Fact file

- DVD recording on DVD-R and DVD-RW
- Six recording speeds
- Programme Delivery Control
- 'Bilingual' Sound Mode
- MP3 Playback

Details

FEATURES
Recording formats: DVD-R, DVD-RW
Recording modes: six
Max. recording time: 10hr
Non-linear editing: Yes
TV tuner: Analogue
Timer: 8-event/one month
GuidePlus/VideoPlus: No/No
STB control: No
Dimensions: 66(w) x 244(h) x 435(d)mm
Weight: 2.4kg

DISC PLAYBACK
DVD; Dual Disc (CD side); Dual Disc (DVD side); CD; MP3; JPEG; VCD; CD-R; CD-RW; DVD-R; DVD-RW (Video); DVD-RW (VR); DVD+R; DVD+R (Dual Layer); DVD+RW

SOCKETS
2 x Scarts; 2 x S-video in; S-video out; antenna in/out; stereo audio out; 2 x stereo audio in; composite in; optical & electrical digital audio outs

CONTACT
0208 231 8858
www.funai.de

TEST DATA

For an explanation of data, see page 116

RECORDING

Test	Reading	Rating
Chroma AM	-67.1dB	Excellent
Chroma PM	-58.0dB	Very good
Frequency response at 4MHz		
XP mode	-0.9dB	Very good
SP mode	-1.0dB	Very good
Frequency response at 2MHz		
LP mode	+1.4dB	Very good
EP mode	+2.5dB	Very good
SLP mode	-2.5dB	Average
SEP mode	-4.9dB	Poor

As with seemingly every other area of the home cinema industry at the moment, the DVD recorder market is currently in the process of opening itself up. The machines at the top end are amazing in terms of what they can do, while new budget models seem to appear every month. This new one from Funai sits firmly in the latter category – but that doesn't mean that it can't cut the mustard.

The first thing that strikes you about this machine is the way that it looks, with the fascia boasting an interesting mixture of style and functionality that is surprising on a player at this price.

There's a decent selection of socketry too. Starting around the back, there is a set of antenna ins and outs, followed by a pair of Scarts and a pair of S-video ports. Audio options include analogue audio in and outputs (two of each) plus optical and electrical digital audio outs. At the front there's two more analogue audio and video connections, and another S-video connection.

While we have come across slicker recording devices, a bit of patience will reward DVD recorder virgins when setting up. Having connected and tuned in your channels, the next job is to choose between DVD-R or DVD-RW – the only types of disc that can be used for recording. Once this is accomplished the next task is the recording itself, using the machine's basic recording mechanism or onscreen Timer which you can use to record up to eight programmes as much as a month in advance.

Once the recording has been made, the Disc option in the Set Up menu offers rudimentary editing facilities in Video and VR modes. There aren't many recording features to be found on this unit, although what there is proved to be useful enough. These include a sound selection function which allows you to switch through the soundtracks of bilingual broadcasts, Programme Delivery Control and an auto chapter function. Needless to say, features available during playback are hardly what you'd call state of the art either, with the player boasting a basic three-stage zoom function, onscreen display and not a great deal else.

performance

We were pleased with what we saw of the recorder before we started to record or play back and thankfully, we were just as pleased afterwards. The Funai offers six recording modes (XP, SP, LP, EP, SLP, SEP) which each deliver a subsequent increase in recording time at the expense of playback quality. XP offers an hour's worth of space, and is just about as good as we'd hoped that it would be.

You wouldn't believe just how colourful the *Countdown* set is when you're watching on a decent TV, and our XP recording did a decent job reproducing the garish pinks and rather unpleasant-looking browns. Things were reasonably sharp too with only a slight amount of tizzing around the edge of images and less grain than we feared there might be.

At the other end of the scale, SEP mode offers 600 minutes and suffers from quite severe blocking and grain, as our recording of Noel Edmonds' *Deal or No Deal* will attest.

We used the stunning R2 version of *Blade 2* to test playback quality from a pre-recorded disc, and again things were pleasing enough. Colours are accurate and vibrant, despite a certain amount of grain in the image that serves to soften things. Meanwhile, light sources are bright enough, while there's enough shadow detail to let viewers see everything that they need to. Check out the opening scene where the main baddie reveals his identity as a terrifying vampire hybrid creature near the beginning, and you'll see exactly what we mean.

This Funai recorder has plenty to recommend it, from decent functionality to a picture that does the business well enough. There might be only two recording formats to choose from and very few bells and whistles, but at just about £100 we've little trouble in recommending this recorder ■ **Phil Mason**

Also Consider >>

CYBERHOME CH-DVR1600
Same kind of deal at an identical price, but writes to DVD+/+RW and isn't as good
Reviewed: Issue 297

YAMADA DVR-8100
Another DVD+R/+RW machine at a similar price and with roughly comparable performance
Reviewed: Issue 292

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD
Decent picture performance; easy to use; cheap

WHAT'S BAD
Average features; limited recording options; slow to load

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL VERDICT
A decent solution for those that want to get rid of that cumbersome video recorder but don't want to pay the earth

★★★★★

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High quality GIGATAIN recordable media with ***"SOFT Printable Coating"*** – ideal to print high resolution images when used in compatible printers.

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Also Consider >>

PIONEER PDP-615EX
Similar sockets, and ISF C3 to alter the screen to suit the environment. Not yet reviewed

PANASONIC TH-65PV500
An imposing addition to the Viera range with a built in digital tuner. Not yet reviewed

Fact file

- 63in plasma TV
- Tuner-free monitor design
- AVMII picture processing
- HD ready
- 1366 x 768 pixels

Fujitsu P63XHA40

Details

FEATURES

Screen size and shape: 63in, 16:9
Tuner Type: None
Sound system: Stereo
Resolution: 1366 x 768
HD Ready: Yes
Quoted contrast ratio: 3,000:1
Quoted brightness: 1,000cd/m2
Screen dimensions: 1,506 (w) x 896(h) x 123(d)mm
Weight: 72kg
Other features: AVMII picture processing, 10-bit video processing

SOCKETS

HDMI input; DVI-D inputs; PC RGB input; RS-232C; 2 component video inputs; S-video input; composite video input; 3x stereo audio inputs; external speaker connections

CONTACT

020 8731 3450
www.fujitsu-general.co.uk

TEST DATA

For a full explanation of test data, please see page 116

Test	Rating
Colour	Excellent
Geometry	Excellent
Frequency response	Excellent

Even by today's standards, Fujitsu's new second-generation 63in plasma is still a whopper, and its appearance commands a certain amount of respect – assuming you can get all of its 72kg out of the box!

Despite its size, it looks surprisingly delicate and not as imposing as you might expect. The expanse of screen is framed by a thin, elegant, silver trim, with just a tiny smattering of discreet silver buttons on the right-hand side above the ambient light sensor.

The P63XHA40 is a tuner-free affair, while the speakers are not included – they're an optional extra. You'll also have to fork out for a desktop stand if you don't intend to wall mount the TV. The biggest single omission is that of any Scart sockets, which is likely to present problems if you intend to plug in a digibox or Freeview receiver.

On the plus side, the P63XHA40 features an HDMI connection, backed up by compatibility with all the necessary high-definition formats. There is also a pair of component inputs, but unfortunately, the DVI-D input is not HDCP compliant.

And while the previous model (the P63XHA30E) had AVM picture processing, this new one has an updated version in the shape of AVMII, with 10-bit video processing that delivers over a billion colours, and improvements including natural colour tuning, adaptive image processing and various noise reduction circuits.

performance

Things become very much a game of two halves when it comes to feeding in signals. If you can plug in a standard definition signal via S-video or composite, then the sheer scale of the screen and its 1366 x 768 native resolution highlights every flaw of the broadcast. While the colour may look great, the fuzzy edges and any block noise (even with AVMII switched on) will also grab your attention.

Moving up through the quality scale puts a whole different complexion on things and the P63HXA40 proves itself to be a talented performer. DVD via progressive scan and high-definition sources produces superb pictures and that mammoth native screen resolution is put to great use.

While the results of AVMII on standard definition sources were not the best, on quality material it's top notch. Block noise and mosquito noise are minimised, ghost edges taken care of and jagged edges smoothed. Black levels are good and fine detail is handled brilliantly. With our HD test footage of a wildlife documentary, the TV picked out so much detail on the feathers of a flock of cormorants that we felt compelled to go up to the screen and give them a good ruffle! The only low point was a rare touch of colour banding.

If you do decide to plump for the optional Fujitsu speakers rather than plugging them into a surround sound system, you'll get a decent approximation of virtual surround. But if you're splashing this much cash on pictures, why skimp on sound?

Overall, the P63HXA40 is a bit of a mixed bag. Although points in its favour include high-definition capability and fabulous picture quality when it's fed from the relevant sources, the absence of any Scarts is something of an irritation while standard-definition pictures could be better ■ **Nicola Veness**

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD
Subtle design; two component inputs; picture with progressive scan/HD sources

WHAT'S BAD
No Scarts; no tuner; standard definition broadcast pictures

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL VERDICT
Good for home cinema, but not a true all-rounder

★★★★★

42in plasma TV ● Approx price: **£2,000**

Fact file

- 42in 16:9 plasma TV
- 1366 x 768 native resolution
- DNIe picture processing
- HD Ready
- 10,000:1 claimed contrast ratio

Also Consider >>

LG 42PX4DV
Cheaper, but doesn't have the native resolution to do HD – or even DVD – full justice.
Reviewed: this issue

HITACHI 42PD7200
Now being discounted to around £2k, this Hitachi is HD Ready and more accomplished as a performer
Reviewed: Issue 294

Samsung PS-42S5H

Details

FEATURES
Screen size and shape: 42in, 16:9
Tuner Type: Analogue
Sound system: Nicam stereo, with SRS TrusurroundXT
Resolution: 1366 x 768
HD Ready: Yes
Quoted contrast ratio: 10,000:1
Quoted brightness: 1,300cd/m2
Screen dimensions: 1059(w) x 739(h) x 95(d)mm
Weight: 43kg
Other features: autotuning; teletext; DNIe processing; digital noise reduction; energy saving mode; colour control; picture in picture; graphic equaliser; child lock; screenburn protection

SOCKETS
HDMI input; service port; VGA D-Sub port; PC audio in; composite video in/out; S-video in; 2 Scarts (1 RGB); component video input; RF input; stereo audio output; 2 stereo audio inputs

CONTACT
0870 242 0303
www.samsung-electronics.co.uk

TEST DATA

For a full explanation of test data, please see page 116

Test	Rating
Colour	Average
Geometry	Excellent
Frequency	Good
Response	

If at the end of this review you decide to buy a PS-42S5H, take special care that you get the right model. Samsung is currently selling a whole raft of radically different plasma TVs boasting practically identical model numbers. Even we got confused a couple of times, so heaven help your average punter. Anyway, you have been warned…

The key bit of the PS-42S5H's name is the H at the end; it stands for 'high definition'. In other words, it has a high definition-friendly native resolution of 1366 x 768.

The 42S5H follows up on this resolution by providing an HDMI jack, component video input, and compatibility with all the key HD formats to earn itself its official HD Ready wings. Other connections of interest include two Scarts, a PC jack, and all the customary lesser quality AV options.

The 42S5H's biggest feature credit is the DNIe picture processing for improving motion handling, boosting colour saturations and tone, extending the contrast range, and adding more fine detail.

There's also a picture-in-picture facility, digital noise reduction, and SRS TruSurroundXT processing for the audio. That's pretty much it for the interesting stuff, though.

performance

Set to work on typical RGB-fed Sky Digital fodder, the 42S5H looks pretty ordinary. Problem One concerns the way images seem flattened by a washed-out look to dark picture areas. Samsung claims a contrast ratio of 10,000:1 for this screen, which seems laughably optimistic as dark areas are besmirched by an irksome grey/green pall.

Not surprisingly this unwanted grey/green tone to shadows negatively impacts some colour tones too, with skin and background textures during dark scenes often taking on a decidedly unhealthy, unnatural pallor.

While this Samsung may boast HD levels of native resolution, its portrayal of standard definition looks soft and short of fine detail.

Finally, in the negative column, the 42S5H is nothing like as adept at suppressing plasma's old-school problems with fizzing noise over horizontal motion as most of its current rivals.

Some of these problems go away with HD footage. Fine detail levels certainly look vastly improved (though still not immaculate), and there's less of the motion artefacting. Oddly, dark picture areas also suffer less with the toning issues mentioned earlier. However, the colour tone still slips a little off key from time to time, and there's a slight 'pulsing' look to some HD hues that can be quite distracting.

Sonically, the 42S5H is much more assured and consistent. It underpins a widely dispersed, tightly controlled soundstage with some fairly deep, undistorted bass; opens up nicely for action scenes; and always keeps dialogue clear and trebles free of harshness, no matter how tough the going gets.

Unfortunately, though, the 42S5H's audio talents can only carry it so far. The bottom line is that even if the 42S5H had the most spectacular audio performance ever, (which it doesn't), it still wouldn't be enough to lift the TV out of the 'average' pigeonhole it's been forced into by its pictures ■ **John Archer**

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD
Nice looking set; decent connectivity; HD Ready; above average audio

WHAT'S BAD
Numerous picture flaws

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL VERDICT

Appealing price for an HD Ready 42in plasma – until you but basic picture quality isn't up to much

★★★★★

Also Consider >>

SONY KE-P42M1
Also not HD Ready and not as good a performer even though it costs more. It is gorgeously designed
Reviewed: Issue 298

LG RZ-42PY10X
LG's current HD Ready 42in plasma represents pretty good value with its £2,500 price tag
Reviewed: Issue 298

Fact file

- 42in 16:9 plasma TV
- 852 x 480 native resolution
- HD-capable (not 'Ready')
- XD Engine processing
- Built-in digital tuner

LG RZ-42PX4DV

Details

FEATURES
Screen size and shape: 42in, 16:9
Tuner Type: digital and analogue
Sound system: Nicam stereo with BBE
Resolution: 852 x 480
HD Ready: No
Quoted contrast ratio: 10,000:1
Quoted brightness: 1,500cd/m2
Screen dimensions (minus stand): 1,252(w) x 653.5(h) x 94(d)mm
Weight: 45kg
Other features: autotuning; teletext; backlight adjustment; childlock; MPEG and 3D NR; 8-day EPG support; XD Engine II processing; Intelligent Eye; advanced colour management; Cinema mode

SOCKETS
HDMI input; RS-232; VGA D-Sub port; PC audio in; IR in; composite video in; 2 S-video in, 3 Scarts (one RGB); component video input; RF in/out

CONTACT
0870 607 5544
www.lge.co.uk

TEST DATA

For a full explanation of test data, please see page 116

Test	Rating
Colour	Very good
Geometry	Excellent
Frequency response	Good

Bad news alert: perhaps inevitably for a 42in plasma TV costing just £1,600, LG's 42PX4DV isn't fully HD Ready. But for once, that doesn't mean that HD fans should write it off...

Build quality is robust, and the combination of glossy black inner screen frame and matte grey outer chassis is effective, if hardly original.

Among the connections are, an HDMI socket and high-def-capable component video jacks. This means it's compatible with such next-gen HD sources as Sky's HD receiver and Blu-ray/HD-DVD decks. So how come the TV's not truly HD Ready? Because its native resolution of 852 x 480 is too low. Still, if the TV downscales HD footage well enough, many may feel the loss of a little native resolution is a fair trade for futureproof connectivity.

The 42PX4DV doesn't skimp on other features. There's a digital tuner boasting 8-day electronic programme guide support (without direct timer event setting/genre search options).

There's also LG's XD Engine, to boost image clarity, colour saturations/tone, contrast, brightness, colour gradation/grayscaling, and frame rate handling.

There's plenty more, but instead we can reveal that all of the LG's up-front good stuff is not spoiled by a poor picture performance.

performance

Black levels are excellent. Not quite as good as LG's extraordinary quoted contrast ratio of 10,000:1 would suggest, but dark scenes do enjoy genuine depth and dynamism.

The TV also impresses with its suppression of the traditional plasma problem of fizzing noise over motion, colour banding, and grey dottiness over dark areas.

Colours are excellent, too. Provided you set the saturation low, the tone is unusually natural for this money, especially during HD or progressive scan viewing. Thanks to exceptional brightness levels, richly saturated hues scream off the screen.

Given the 42PX4DV's lowly native resolution of 852 x 480, its fine detail response clearly warrants close attention. Starting with HD feeds, the lack of resolution undoubtedly results in a slight softness and lack of texture relative to some true HD Ready TVs. Also, the LG's downscaling system introduces a little extra dot crawl.

With standard definition sources the LG arguably looks sharper and cleaner than many of its higher-resolution rivals.

There are other little niggles, though. HD pictures flicker slightly. Digital feeds through the HDMI jack can suffer low-level MPEG noise (this can be minimised by carefully limiting the brightness and contrast).

The 42PX4DV's sound is well above average. A touch more power and frequency range would have been nice, but for the money we were suitably impressed by the smoothly handled bass, subtle well-rounded trebles, the lack of harshness, and clean mid-range.

The 42PX4DV really is an intriguing proposition. Our HD obsession is such that we would probably choose to save up for a truly HD Ready TV. But if £1,600 is really as high as you're able to go, at least this LG delivers more quality, features and futureproofing than you've any right to expect ■ **John Archer**

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD
Price; connectivity; features; pictures, especially with SD

WHAT'S BAD
Not HD Ready; HD pictures look softer and noisier than rivals and HDMI feeds look noisy

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL VERDICT
Good budget option that's great with standard sources and compatible with hi-def

★★★★½

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Panasonic TH-42PE50-CAB

FEATURES:

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- 700:1 CONTRAST RATIO HD LCD DISPLAY • 500 CD/M2 SCREEN BRIGHTNESS
- SVGA/XGA/SXGA COMPATIBLE • HD READY • NTEGRATED DIGITAL TERRESTRIAL TUNER (IDTV)
- 1 X HDMI CONNECTION/S

Panasonic TX-26LXD52

TRP. £1109.99 SAVE 28% £771.50

- 26 " DIAGONAL SCREEN SIZE (INCH) • 16:9 ASPECT RATIO
- (1386 X 768) PIXELS RESOLUTION • 800:1 CONTRAST RATIO
- NTSC, PAL, SECAM COMPATIBLE • HD READY
- PARENTAL LOCK/PARENTAL CONTROL • 2000 PAGE TELETEXT MEMORY
- QUICK SETUP • FREEVIEW

Panasonic SC-HT330

- DVD HOME CINEMA SYSTEM)
- MULTI-FORMAT DVD PLAYBACK
- DOLBY DIGITAL/DTS/DIGITAL PRO-LOGIC
- 400 WATTS TOTAL OUTPUT
- HDCD COMPATIBLE
- NTSC PLAYBACK

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- 160GB DVD RECORDER • MULTI-FORMAT DVD RECORDING
- MULTI-FORMAT DVD PLAYBACK • 1 SEC.QUICK START FOR RECORDING
- UP TO 284 HRS RECORDING • INTEGRATED FREEVIEW

Panasonic DMR-ES10

TRP. £269.99 SAVE 45% £149.00

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- PAL PROGRESSIVE SCAN • DOLBY DIGITAL

Panasonic DMR-ES20

TRP. £329.99 SAVE 38% £205.00

- A STYLISH DVD RECORDER WITH FREEVIEW, DVD-RAM,DVD-RW, DVD-R, DVD+R, DVD+RW PLAYBACK AND 1 SEC QUICK START.

Panasonic PT-AE900

- HIGH DEFINITION 16:9 HOME
- DYNAMIC SHARPNESS CONTROL
- CINEMA COLOUR MANAGEMENT
- SMOOTH SCREEN TECHNOLOGY

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Panasonic TH-37PV500-CAB

TRP. £3059.99 SAVE 25% £2199.00

- 37" VIERA HIGH DEFINITION PLASMA TELEVISION WITH INTEGRATED IDTV, VIERA COLOUR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND SD-MPEG4/JPEG PLAYBACK.THIS IS AN ELEGANT, FLOWING DESIGN THAT ACCENTUATES THE UNIT'S THIN PROFILE AND FLAT SCREEN. THIS NEW STYLE ALLOWS FOR THE BORDERS TO BLEND WITH THE IMAGE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS.
- INCLUDES FLOORSTAND.

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JVC LT-26B60

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£548.95

- THE LT-26B60 IS A STYLISH 26" LCD TELEVISION WITH A W-XGA LCD PANEL FOR IMPROVED PICTURE QUALITY. ALSO FEATURES NTSC/PAL/SECAM CAMPATIBLITY, A WIDESCREEN RATION OF 16:9, PICTURE-IN-PICTURE AND SCREEN RESOLUTION OF 1366X768.

JVC LT-20E50

- THIS IS A STYLISH 20" LCD TELEVISION WITH A WXGA (800X600) PANEL, BICOLUMN DESIGN, 600:1 CONTRAST, 10W RMS OUTPUT AND IS SUPPLIED WITH A TABLETOP STAND.

JVC TH-S66

TRP. £349.99 SAVE 24%

£266.59

- A STYLISH DVD DIGITAL CINEMA SYSTEM. HIGH POWER DVD AUDIO/VIDEO SYSTEM, WHICH CAN HANDLE WMA MP3 AND DIVX FILES, AS WELL AS DELIVERING RAZOR SHARP PLAYBACK.

JVC DR-MH20

- THE DR-MH20S IS A STYLISH HDD AND DVD RCORDER COMBI DECK. FEATURES PAL PROGRESSIVE, 80GB HDD, MULTI-FORMAT DVD RECORDER (DVD RAM/-RW/-R), MULTI-FORMAT DVD/CD PLAYBACK (CD/CDR-RW/SVCD/MP3/JPEG, DVD,DVD-R/-RW) AND DOLBY DIGITAL/DTS COMPATIBILTY.

JVC LT-32DS6

- THE LT-32DS6 IS A STYLISH AND SLIM-LINE DESIGN 32" LCD TELEVISION WITH DIST, HDMI CONNECTION AND INTEGRATED FREEVIEW RECEIVER. THIS MODULE FEATURES W-XGA HD DIGITAL LCD PANEL, PC INPUT, DYNAPIX PICTURE ENHANCEMENT TECHNOLOGY, CONNECTIVITY RICH, AND VARIETY OF ACCESSORIES.

JVC PD-42DX6

- THE PD-42DX6 IS A STYLISH 42" HIGH DEFINITION READY PLASMA WITH BUILT-IN FREEVIEW. THIS MODULE FEATURES 106 CM VISIBLE DIAGONAL SCREEN SIZE, 16:9 ASPECT RATIO, 50 HZ PICTURE PROCESSING, DIGITAL COMB FILTER, 1024X768 PANEL RESOLUTION (PIXELS), MULTIPLE WIDESCREEN MODES, TEXT DUAL SCREEN, COLOUR DETAIL ENHANCER, EPG (GUIDE PLUS+) AND INTGRATED FREEVIEW

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JVC LT-32A61

- THE JVC LT-32A61 IS A 32" 16:9 WIDESCREEN HD READY LCD TV WITH DVI INPUT FOR ENJOYMENT OF HIGH QUALITY CONTENT, HOUSED IN A STYLISH DESIGN.
- IT PROVIDES A W-XGA (1366 X 768) PANEL, 10W TOTAL RMS OUTPUT, 8-PAGE MEMORY MEGATEXT AND A VARIETY OF CONNECTIONS SUCH AS - 2 X SCART, COMPONENT VIDEO AND DVI.

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Pioneer PDP-436FDE

FEATURES:

HD ready

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- HDMI CONNECTION
- 3000:1 CONTRAST RATIO
- THE UTIMATE PERFORMANCE PLASMA

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- THE PDP-436FDE IS THE LATEST, STUNNING HIGH DEFINITION PLASMA DESIGN FROM PIONEER FEATURING A 1280X768 PANEL RESOLUTION, 3000:1 CONTRAST RATIO, 1.100 CD/M2 SCREEN BRIGHTNESS, PROGRESSIVE SCAN, NTSC, PAL, SECAM COMPATIBLE, PICTURE & PICTURE, PICTURE & TEXT, PICTURE IN PICTURE, 1 X HDMI INPUT AND AN ANALOGUE MEDIA BOX.

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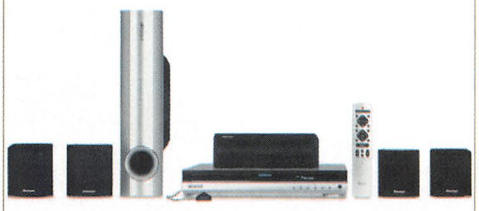
Pioneer DCS-333



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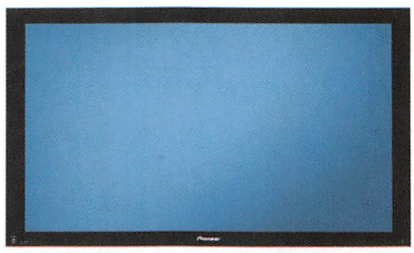
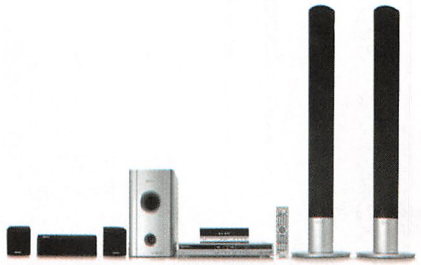
Pioneer PDP-506FDE



- THE PDP-506FDE IS A FANTASTIC 50" PLASMA TELEVISION THAT INCLUDES AN ANALOGUE MULTI-MEDIA BOX. ALSO FEATURES A HIGH DEFINITION 127CM VISIBLE VIEWING ANGLE SCREEN, 4000:1 CONTRAST RATIO, 1.100 CD/M2 SCREEN BRIGHTNESS, 1280X768 PANEL RESOLUTION, NTSC, PAL, SECAM COMPATIBILITY, SVGA/XGA/SXGA COMPATIBILITY, SRS SURROUND SOUND AND HDMI INPUT

Pioneer RCS-77H



TRP. £719.99 SAVE 26% **£535.40**

- THE RCS-77H IS A STYLISH 5.1 HOME CINEMA SYSTEM WITH A DVD RECORDER AND A 160GB HARD DISC DRIVE. ALSO FEATURES 455 HOURS RECORDING CAPABILITY, MULTI-FORMAT DVD RECORD, MULTI-FORMAT DVD/CD PLAYBLACK, 620 W AMPLIFIER, 4 X 110W SATELLITE SPEAKERS, 1 X 110W CENTRE SPEAKER, 1 X 70W SUBWOOFER, 14 SOUND MODES AND DOLBY PRO LOGIC/PRO LOGIC II/DOLBY DIGITAL/DTS DIGITAL COMPATIBLE.

Pioneer DVR-433

- AN AMAZING 227 HOURS OF RECORDING ON A POWERFUL 80GB HARD DRIVE.•HIGH SPEED TRANSFER FROM HARD DRIVE TO DISC, WITHOUT ANY LOSS OF QUALITY • LETS YOU ENJOY UNSURPASSED VIDEO QUALITY, DUE TO IT'S NEW HIGH QUALITY MPEG ENCODER AND 10BIT DIGITAL VIDEO SIGNAL PROCESSING.

Pioneer DVR630

- THE NEW DVR-630H HARD DISC DVD RECORDER HAS AN INCREDIBLE 711 HOUR RECORDING CAPABILITY, ON A 250GB HARD DISC. WITH HIGH SPEED COPY RECORDING FROM HDD TO DVD, WITHOUT ANY LOSS OF QUALITY. PLUS DV CONNECTION.

Pioneer DV-380S

- MULTI-FORMAT DVD PLAYER • PLAY DIVX® MOVIES ON YOUR TV
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- WITH ADVANCED SUPER VIEW
- BLACK TFT LCD PANEL AND ADVANCED OPTICAL PICTURE CONTROL.

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TRP. £1399.99 SAVE 40% **£835.00**

- THE LC-32GA6 IS A STYLISH SLIM AND WELL-DESIGNED 32" HIGH DEFINITION READY WIDESCREEN LCD TV. THIS ELEGANT LCD TV WILL ALLOW TO EXPERIENCE HOME ENTERTAINMENT AS ITS BEST AND FEATURES 16:9 ASPECT RATIO, 800:1 CONTRAST RATIO, BLACK TFT LCD DISPLAY, 450 CD/M2 SCREEN BRIGHTNESS, H:170, V:170 DEGREE VIEWING ANGLE, HIGH CONTRAST, 1366 X 768 PANEL RESOLUTION (PIXELS) AND MUCH MORE.

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HITACHI 26LD6600

- THE HITACHI'S 26LD6600 IS A STYLISH 26" HIGH DEFINITION READY LCD 16:9 WIDESCREEN TELEVISION WHICH THE LATEST FLAT PANEL TECHNOLOGY. THIS MODULE FEATURES 66 CM VISIBLE DIAGONAL SCREEN SIZE, 16:9 ASPECT RATIO, 600:1 CONTRAST RATIO, 500 CD/M2 SCREEN BRIGHTNESS, PROGRESSIVE SCAN, 1280 X 768 PANEL RESOLUTION (PIXELS), PICTURE & PICTURE, PICTURE & TEXT, PICTURE IN PICTURE AND A HDMI CONNECTION.

TOSHIBA RD-XS34

- 160GB HDD DVD RECORDER • PAL PROGRESSIVE SCAN • TIMESLIP RECORDING • PICTURE IN PICTURE AND VIDEOPLUS. IT CAN ACCEPT A WIDE VARIETY OF PLAYBACK FORMATS INC. CD, DVD, DVD-R, DVD-RAM, JPEG, SVCD AND WMA • ALSO PROVIDES A HOST OF CONNECTIONS INCLUDING COMPONENT VIDEO • 2 X SCART (RGB) • DV INPUT AND S-VIDEO

HITACHI 32LD7200

- HITACHI'S NEW 82CM VISIBLE LCD WIDESCREEN TELEVISION COMBINES PICTURE MASTER TECHNOLOGY WITH STUNNING DESIGN. OFFERING A WHOLE RANGE OF FEATURES INCLUDING DVI AND HDMI CONNECTIONS,
- THIS OUTSTANDING LCD TV WILL FIT PERFECTLY INTO ANY ENVIRONMENT.

HITACHI 42PD7500

- STYLISH NEW FLAT PANEL PLASMA TV BY HITACHI, FEATURING BUILT-IN FREEVIEW, HDMI AND DVI CONNECTIONS, PLUS HITACHI FEATURES; 'H4' PANEL AND 'PICTURE MASTER' ADVANCED PROCESSOR • HIGH SCREEN RESOLUTION OF 1024 X 1024 PIXELS, MOTORISED SWIVEL PANEL

PHILIPS 27WLT56

- THE 27WLT56 IS A STYLISH 27" HIGH DEFINITION READY LCD WITH BUILT-IN FREEVIEW.
- ALSO FEATURING A WXGA 1280X720 RESOLUTION, COMB FILTER (3D/DIGITAL), PROGRESSIVE SCAN, NICAM STEREO SOUND, PICTURE FRAME LCD STYLING, ACTIVE VISION PICTURE PROCESSING, HIGH CONTRAST AND BRIGHTNESS RATIO, PLUS DVI INPUT AND MUCH MORE...

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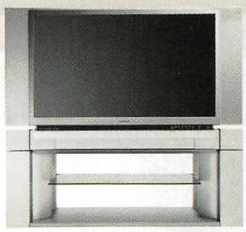
TOSHIBA 52WM48P



- 52 " DIAGONAL SCREEN SIZE (INCH)
- 132 CM VISIBLE DIAGONAL SCREEN SIZE
- 16:9 ASPECT RATIO
- 1000:1 CONTRAST RATIO
- 600 CD/M2 SCREEN BRIGHTNESS
- 1280X720 PANEL RESOLUTION (PIXELS)
- NTSC, PAL, SECAM COMPATIBLE
- DLP™ TECHNOLOGY
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- ((SRS)) SURROUND SOUND

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- 2000:1 CONTRAST RATIO
- 1000 ANSI LUMENS BRIGHTNESS
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- CONNECTION/S 1 X COMPONENT VIDEO
- CONNECTION/S COMPOSITE VIDEO
- CONNECTION/S
- USB 1.1 CONNECTION/S
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- 1000 ANSI LUMENS BRIGHTNESS
- DLP DISPLAY TECHNOLOGY

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TOSHIBA 32WL56

- STYLISH NEW LCD TV, FROM TOSHIBA, FEATURING;
- WXGA RESOLUTION, PICTURE FRAME LCD STYLING
- ACTIVE VISION PICTURE PROCESSING,
- HIGH CONTRAST AND BRIGHTNESS RATIO,
- PLUS HDMI INPUT AND MUCH MORE...

TRP. £1099.99 SAVE 23% **£847.00**

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HITACHI 42PD7200

Our Price **£2083.83**

TRP. £2609.99 SAVE 20%

FEATURES: THE STYLISH 42" HIGH DEFINITION READY PLASMA WIDESCREEN TELEVISION WITH PICTURE MASTER TECHNOLOGY.THE MODULE FEATURES AN ELECTRICALLY OPERATED (REMOTE CONTROLLED SWIVEL) PEDESTAL STAND, 106 CM VISIBLE DIAGONAL SCREEN SIZE, 16:9 ASPECT RATIO, 1000:1 CONTRAST RATIO, 1200 CD/M2 SCREEN BRIGHTNESS, 1024X1024 PANEL RESOLUTION (PIXELS), NTSC, PAL, SECAM COMPATIBLE, 2 X STANDARD SCART CONNECTION/S, 1 X HDMI CONNECTION/S AND 1 X DVI CONNECTION/S

WHO ARE SOUND AND VISION?

HAVING BEEN ESTABLISHED OVER 15 YEARS SOUND & VISION HAVE BECOME ONE OF THE LEADING HOME ENTERTAINMENT SPECIALISTS IN THE UK.

BASED IN BOLTON, WE ARE THE UK'S CHOICE FOR EXPERT ADVICE AND EXTREMELY LOW PRICES.

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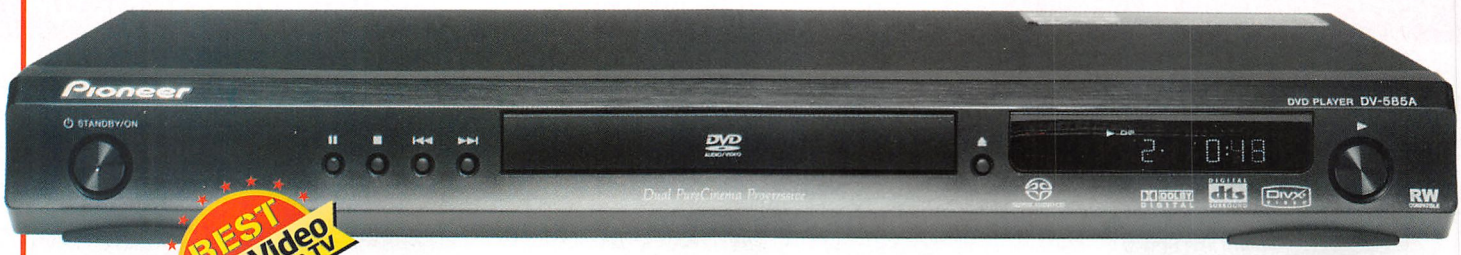
DVD player ● Approx price: **£120**



BEST What Video & Widescreen TV BUY

Pioneer DV-585A

Fact file

- Progressive scan
- DVD-Audio/SACD playback
- DiVX VOD playback
- 4x zoom
- MP3/WMA/JPEG playback

Details

FEATURES

HDMI/DVI output: No/No
Prog scan output: Yes
DVD-A/SACD: Yes/Yes
Multiregion from box: No
Dimensions: 420(w) x 49.5(h) x 215(d)mm
Weight: 1.7kg
Other features: Disc Navigator; Virtual Surround; built-in Dolby Digital/DTS decoders; Last Memory playback; slow-motion; JPEG slideshow

DISC PLAYBACK

DVD-R, DVD-RW, DVD+R, DVD+R (Dual Layer), DVD+RW, DVD-V, DVD-A, SACD, DualDisc, CD, MP3, WMA, JPEG, VCD, SVCD, CD-R, CD-RW, MPEG4 DiVX, MPEG1, MPEG2

SOCKETS

Component video output; RGB Scart output; S-video output; composite video output; optical digital audio output; electrical digital audio output; 5.1-channel outputs; stereo audio output

CONTACT

01735 789 500
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TEST DATA

For a full explanation of test data, please see page 116

Test	Reading	Rating
Video jitter	6ns	Good
Audio jitter	694.5ps	Poor
S/N ratio	74.1dB	Very good
Chroma AM	-74.8dB	excellent
Chroma PM	-71.6dB	excellent
Chroma crosstalk	-57.1dB	excellent
Frequency response at 5.8MHz:		
S-video	-1.2dB	good
Composite	-1.3dB	good
Component	-0.3dB	excellent

The DV-585A is towards the bottom of Pioneer's DVD player range, yet it belies that status with its design and spec sheet. Build quality is excellent, with a substantial fascia and minimalist labelling.

At 1.7kg this deck can't match the sheer presence of the high-end DV-989, but many of the higher-end features have trickled down.

Connectivity sees the provision of component video outputs for PAL progressive scan signals, with RGB Scart and S-video backup. Audio connections run to both optical and electrical digital outputs, as well as 5.1-channel and stereo phono outs.

The 5.1-channel sockets hint at onboard Dolby Digital and DTS decoders, but also DVD-Audio and SACD compatibility. This is very welcome, and only HDMI and Firewire ports could up the ante.

Multimedia playback sees the deck accept MP3, JPEG and WMA files, as well as MPEG4 DiVX files. There is a DiVX VOD code supplied as well, so you can 'rent' material.

This is all rather good for a deck that can be had for just over £100 if you shop online.

The engine room of the 585 features a 108MHz/12-bit video DAC and a 24-bit/192kHz audio DAC.

Audio options include a Virtual Surround function, for more immersive audio reproduction from two speakers, as well as a dynamic range control setting, for muting louder sequences. If dialogue is indistinct you can boost it using the Dialog function.

Video adjustments are available for sharpness, brightness, contrast, gamma, hue (NTSC sources only) and chroma level. You can also switch on block noise reduction (BNR) if artefacts are a problem.

Setup is easy, thanks to a simple, well laid-out manual and excellent onscreen display.

Component video and regular video outputs function at the same time, so if you switch on progressive scan when your TV can't accept it, you can still use the regular video output to go into the menu and right the situation. This may sound simple, but many decks won't let you do this, leaving you in the dark if you accidentally select progressive scan.

Other features are standard, but exhaustive, with a 4x zoom, slo-mo playback, A-B repeat and high-speed search among the usual suspects.

performance

Video performance via an RGB Scart to a Panasonic TH-37PV500 plasma panel is very good. There is a very solid level of detail, a pleasing stability to the picture and some sumptuous colours.

There perhaps isn't the very highest picture quality the format can deliver (but if there was, what would be the point of that $800 DV-989?), but the 585 can stand toe-to-toe with like-priced competitors.

Switching to a component feed and activating progressive scan delivers a deeper image, with even more stability to the picture and some bold colours. It really is very enjoyable.

An HDMI output would see an improvement, with the absence of digital-to-analogue converting, and some decks around this price are offering it, making this an omission worth noting.

Audio reproduction is very good from regular DVDs. Film soundtracks are delivered with style and power and sound a treat on a good system.

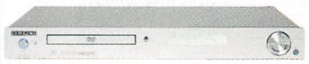
DVD-Audio and SACD playback unleash a new level of audio performance, but it requires impressive amp and speaker systems and this deck, at this price, is unlikely to be partnered with suitable stablemates. Still, it's a welcome feature to have and you're obviously not paying much of a premium for it.

Stepping back from the nitty-gritty of performance, it must be said that this deck impresses with its usability and overall quality. From the onscreen display to the pleasingly solid click issued when you press the power button, this is a classy performer – a sophisticated and elegant model n

David Smith

Also Consider >>

SAMSUNG DVD-HD945
HDMI output and video upscaling, make this an excellent deck
Reviewed: Issue 292



TOSHIBA SD-350E
HDMI output and performance way beyond the £100 or so asking price.
Reviewed: Issue 300

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD
Picture; sound; features

WHAT'S BAD
No HDMI output

Picture	★★★★½
Sound	★★★★★
Features	★★★★½
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL VERDICT
No HDMI output, but there are enough other features to make a mockery of that £120 price tag

★★★★★

Samsung DVD-HD850

Details

FEATURES
HDMI/DVI output: Yes/No
Prog scan output: Yes
DVD-A/SACD: No/No
Multiregion from box: No
Dimensions: 430(w) x 49(h) x 250(d)mm
Weight: 2.3kg
Other features: Slow motion; JPEG/WMA/MP3 playback; instant replay function; repeat play; programmed play; hackable for region-free playback

DISC PLAYBACK
DVD, DVD-R/-RW (Video mode), Dual Disc (DVD only), DVD+R/+RW, CD, CD-R/-RW, VCD, SVCD, MP3, WMA, MPEG4 (DiVX v3, v5), XviD, JPEG, MPEG1 (CD/DVD-ROM), MPEG2 (TS CD/DVD-ROM)

SOCKETS
HDMI output; component video output; RGB Scart output; S-video output; composite video output; optical digital audio output; electrical digital audio output

CONTACT
0870 242 0303
www.samsung.com/uk

TEST DATA
For a full explanation of test data, please see page 116

Test	Reading	Rating
Video jitter	4ns	Very good
Audio jitter	3064.2ps	Poor
S/N ratio	74.3dB	Very good
Chroma AM	-74.5dB	Excellent
Chroma PM	-65.2dB	Very good
Chroma crosstalk	-63.7dB	Excellent
Frequency response at 5.8MHz		
Composite	-0.7dB	Excellent
S-video	-0.4dB	Excellent
Component	-1.0dB	Very good

HDMI outputs are all the rage in the DVD world at the moment. They offer superior connection to a TV than component video outputs thanks to the digital connection.

Samsung's DVD-HD850 sports one of these 'digital Scarts', taking its place alongside an increasing number of other decks in offering this high-quality connection.

It also offers upscaling to high-definition levels – how well this is accomplished remains to be seen, but it is an intriguing proposition for those with HD Ready TVs.

Joining the HDMI socket are component video outputs, an RGB Scart, and S-video and composite video sockets. Digital audio signals can be routed to an amp via optical or electrical connections.

Upscaling is the obvious headline feature. You can enjoy a regular progressive scan picture via the HDMI connection, or upconvert it to 720p or 1080i levels. However, this will not approach pure high-definition quality, because the information just isn't there on the DVD to start with.

Multimedia playback includes provision for MP3, JPEG and WMA files, as well as DiVX VOD downloads.

Playback features include slow-motion, an instant replay (skipping back 10 seconds to re-watch a good bit) and instant skip (skipping ahead 10 seconds to avoid a bad bit).

Ease of use is not a plus point. The menu system is okay, but to access it you have to stop playback of a DVD. If you want to make adjustments to things like the black level setting it is a pain to have to stop playback.

Basic HDMI settings are available via the remote, so you can switch to a higher-resolution output and see the difference almost immediately.

performance

Using an RGB Scart connection the 850 delivers quite a good performance. The picture is detailed and the colours are okay, but on cartoon fare like *Toy Story 2* the jump-off-the-screen vibrancy is missing.

Switching to *The Thin Red Line* the deck does better. The image is bright and bold, although it is a touch softer than we are used to.

Using the HDMI socket brings an improvement. First of all, on *Toy Story 2* it just about knocks your eyes out. Fed to a Panasonic TH-37PV500 the resulting image is spectacular.

The Thin Red Line was another story. Live action footage obviously does not leap out at you like animated material can, but there is still an increase in the level of detail. This can spill over into a bit of picture noise, but this could have as much to do with the more accurate delivery of what's on the disc in the first place.

Stick with it and you realise that the HDMI connection is producing a slightly more realistic image, and the progressive scan processing helps.

Upscaling to 720p has no discernible effect, but it does seem to make the image a touch darker.

After toying with this for a while, watching and re-watching sections of both films, the sound intermittently cut out, and only by activating upscaling could we restore it.

Stranger still, switching from PAL to NTSC output (it does not auto-detect) cut the sound completely. Only switching back to PAL restored it.

This foible only appeared after a couple of hours of use, so it may be a sample issue or could be a genuine problem. It needs to be looked out for.

Sound quality was very good when it did get through!

The upshot is that this DVD player is a boom-or-bust proposition – and it can go from one to the other in a heartbeat. Upscaling disappoints, but the basic HDMI output can look stunning. A deck to audition very carefully indeed ■ **David Smith**

Fact file
- HDMI output
- HD upscaling
- PAL progressive scan
- 4x zoom
- DiVX VOD playback

Also Consider >>

PIONEER DV-585A
If you don't need HDMI, this classy model is worth considering
Reviewed: This issue

TOSHIBA SD-350E
A comparable player, with HDMI upscaling and very good performance, at the same price.
Reviewed: Issue 300

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD
HDMI pictures; multimedia compatibility

WHAT'S BAD
Sound issues via HDMI

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL VERDICT
At times this deck is stunning, at others it is infuriating, with too many issues to win a Best Buy badge

★★★★★

DVD player ● Approx price: **£230**

BEST What Video & Widescreen TV BUY

Denon DVD-1920

Fact file

- DVD-Audio/SACD playback
- HDMI output
- Video upscaling
- PAL progressive scan
- DiVX VOD playback

Details

FEATURES

HDMI/DVI output: Yes/No
Prog scan output: Yes
DVD-A/SACD: Yes/Yes
Multiregion from box: No
Dimensions: 435(w) x 75(h) x 310(d)mm
Weight: 2.6kg
Other features: 4x zoom; MP3/JPEG/WMA playback; slide show; slow motion; Pure Direct mode; programmed playback

DISC PLAYBACK

DVD, DVD-A, SACD, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW, DualDisc, CD, MP3, WMA, JPEG, MPEG4 DiVX, MPEG4 XViD, VCD, SVCD, CD-R, CD-RW

SOCKETS

HDMI output; component video output; RGB Scart output; S-video output; composite video output; optical digital audio output; electrical digital audio output; 5.1-channel phono outputs; stereo audio output

CONTACT

01234 741 200
www.denon.co.uk

TEST DATA

For a full explanation of test data, please see page 116

Test	Reading	Rating
Video jitter	33ns	Poor
Audio jitter	353ps	Average
Chroma AM	-70.6dB	Excellent
Chroma PM	-67.1dB	Very good
Frequency response @ 5.8MHz		
Composite	-0.6dB	Very good
S-video	-0.4dB	Excellent
Component	-0.7dB	Very good

Denon's DVD-A1XV is currently the last word in video upscaling, but not everyone can afford to spend more than two grand on a DVD player, so Denon has kindly offered the same feature on decks lower down the range.

The DVD-1920 is a good-looking (available in silver or black) mid-range model with a wealth of features and that all-important HDMI video output to allow video upscaling for those with suitable monitors.

It's not the same system as the A1XV uses, of course. Instead, it uses a Silicon Image scaler, which can deliver a 480/576p, 720p or 1080i signal, with a range of options including a black enhancer and various modes depending on the origin of the input signal. This gives the user a great level of control over the final picture quality.

For those without an HDMI monitor there are component video outputs featuring Faroudja DCDi PAL progressive scan, and an RGB Scart option.

Audio connections include optical and electrical digital audio outputs, alongside 5.1-channel sockets for DVD-Audio/SACD playback.

File compatibility is excellent, including JPEG, WMA and MP3 files, as well as DiVX downloads. There is also the provision of a DiVX video-on-demand (VOD) code.

Playback options include the de rigueur zoom (a 4x version), as well as slow-motion playback in both directions.

A Direct Mode switches off all video circuitry, boosting analogue audio playback in the process, and there is the now familiar dynamic range control as well.

The wealth of features and options inevitably impacts on the ease of use of this deck. It isn't complicated, but you should take your time to set things up properly.

The onscreen menu is basic, but the manual is exhaustive, detailing all of the available features in depth.

The deck will output HDMI and RGB Scart images at the same time, and a small button on the front makes it easy to switch from one HDMI mode to another. This makes it possible to compare performance in different modes while watching a DVD, rather than having to stop playback and enter the menu.

The only drawback is that HDMI output has to be turned off to get a signal from the component sockets.

performance

We'll start with an RGB connection (if you want to use a lower-quality hook-up this deck is a waste of money). Pictures are superb. *Fantastic 4* at times takes on a computer-generated feel, not because it looks artificial, but because it looks near perfect. Colours are realistic and natural and there are no artefacts.

A quick look at *Monsters Inc* confirmed these impressions, with bitingly sharp images.

Switching to an HDMI feed to our Panasonic TH-37PV500 plasma display, the picture becomes slightly more detailed and filmic.

However, the 480/576p setting does seem to introduce some picture noise. Skin tones are more realistic than in RGB, but faces also fizz slightly.

Switching to the upscaled 720p mode, the issue is resolved. The added fizz is removed, while the skin tone accuracy and detail remains.

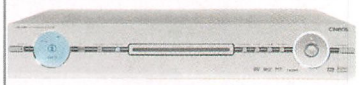
You can check this by ramping up the contrast on your TV and (if it has them) any sharpness settings. These will reveal the flaws of the 480/576p setting and show how the 720p mode clears them up. Just remember to reset your TV afterwards!

This is no doubt a case of different modes working better with different TVs, so it's worth experimenting when you get the 1920 out of its box and not just accepting the first thing you see.

Audio-wise this is also a very impressive performer, with DVD-Audio and SACD an added bonus, while movie soundtracks are the real stars – but everything else has to take a back seat to that engrossing picture n **David Smith**

Also Consider >>

SAMSUNG DVD-HD850
If you fancy an HDMI connection at a bargain basement price.
Reviewed: This issue



PHILIPS DVP9000S
A wonderful player, with HDMI output and Faroudja upscaling.
Reviewed: Issue 299

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD
Picture; sound; multimedia compatibility

WHAT'S BAD
Basic onscreen menu

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★½
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL VERDICT
A smashing deck, with excellent upscaled images via the HDMI output – a cinematic treat

★★★★★

DViCO M-3000U

Details

FEATURES
Upscale standard-definition video to 720p or 1080i; recognises DVD ISO images and video_ts folders; MPEG1/2, XviD and DiVX3/4/5 video support; MP3, Ogg Vorbis and WMA audio support; DTS/Dolby Digital pass-through; NTSC/PAL; 4x search speeds; 4:3/16:9 aspect ratio support; shuffle-play; zoom; auto-run; password-protect; brightness/contrast/saturation adjustment; bookmarks; JPEG slideshow with background music; wallpaper; multiple-partition support; Winamp playlist support; TViX Manager software; firmware-upgradable; recognises IDE HDDs up to 400GB; dimensions: 122.5(w) x 171.8(h) x 68.5(d)mm; weight: 1.2kg

SOCKETS
Composite video, S-video, component video, stereo analogue audio, coaxial digital audio, USB 2.0 port, external infrared sensor, mains power

CONTACT
01635 294300
www.imagogroupplc.com

Fact file

- Upscales standard-definition video to 720/1080i
- Multimedia playback
- 120/250GB HDD
- MPEG2 compatibility
- JPEG stills displayed

DViCO's compact TViX M-3000U is best described as a removable-HDD with multimedia playback capabilities. After transferring compatible files to the unit from a PC, you can connect the Korean-made TViX to an AV system and use its menu-driven onscreen display to select audio, video and still-image files for playback. In other words, the TViX can be seen as a multimedia jukebox of massive capacity (120GB and 250GB versions are available). Because heavily-compressed video formats like DiVX (versions 3.x, 4.x.and 5.x) are supported, hundreds of hours of video could be at your fingertips.

A high-quality DiVX conversion of a half-hour TV programme may occupy 300MB or so. Formatted, a 120GB HDD might have a capacity of 113GB. This equates to around 350 of those half-hour programmes – or, put another way, over 100 movies of average length. If quality is more important than quantity, you might appreciate the TViX's ability to handle the MPEG2 format (as used by DVDs and digital TV). Use a program like DVD Decrypter to create an unencrypted ISO image of your DVD on the TViX hard disk, and the unit will play it.

Recognised audio formats include MP3, WMA and Ogg Vorbis. Were the TViX to be dedicated exclusively to music, you might be able to play continuously for several weeks and never hear the same song twice! The ability to play JPEG still images (with or without background music) is also useful; having your precious photos backed up on a removable storage medium is no bad thing either (all kinds of data can be stored on the HDD – but only compatible files are displayed).

When connected to your PC via USB, it's recognised as an external HDD. You can drag the desired files across. Interestingly, TviX understands both FAT32 and NTFS PC disk formats. For the greatest compatibility, stick with FAT32 – which older PCs (and Macs) are happy with. But there's a caveat. Unlike NTFS, FAT32 has a 4GB 'ceiling', which is insufficient for 'ISO-ripped' DVDs unless they're recompressed with software like DVD Shrink (or you copy across the desired DVD's video_ts folder, which contains smaller files). Basic encoding is supplied in the form of 'TViX Manager', but 'line-in' recording is not possible. In other words, you're reliant on the computer for source material.

The unit connects to your display via composite, S-video or component (there's no Scart/RGB output). Interestingly, the component output is capable of 'upscaling' to 720p or 1080i hi-def formats. Unfortunately, TViX isn't compatible with hi-def media – a forthcoming model will be.

Audio outputs are analogue stereo and electrical/optical digital; the latter will carry DTS and Dolby Digital soundtracks from ripped DVDs to a suitable amplifier. There's also a socket for an external infrared receiver. Useful if the fan-cooled unit is 'hidden away' in a cupboard.

A full-function remote is then used to select the files you want to play back – there are colour-coded buttons for video, audio and photos. Many basic operations can be carried out from the control panel built into the top of the unit. But the remote is needed for some of the more advanced functions.

performance

In terms of performance, ripped DVDs demonstrate that the TViX is just as good as a decent budget DVD player. With poor-quality DiVX encodes, however, a strange 'trailing' artefact was clearly evident. And with one ISO rip of a self-made DVD, we found that we couldn't access all of the recordings. Overall, though, TViX is an unusual and excellent product that brings your digital media together. It will be particularly useful if you tend to travel around a lot ■ **Martin Pipe**

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD
Flexibility; capacity; overall AV performance

WHAT'S BAD
No automatic switching between PAL and NTSC; occasional DiVX artefacts

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL VERDICT
An most unusual but nonetheless welcome product

★★★★★

"Cheers!"

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PLASMA SCREENS

MAKE	MODEL
Hitachi	32PD5200
Hitachi	42PD5200
Hitachi	42PD5300
JVC	AV42B50
LG	RZ42PX11
Panasonic	TH37PE30B
Panasonic	TH37PW7B
Panasonic	TH42PE30B
Panasonic	TH42PW7B
Panasonic	TH50PV30B
Philips	37PF9946
Philips	42PF9966
Philips	42PF9986
Pioneer	PDP435XDE
Pioneer	PDP435FDE-TE
Pioneer	PDP505XDE
Pioneer	PDP503MXEV
Samsung	PS42V4SX
Samsung	PS50P3HXX
Sharp	LC37GD1E
Sony	KDEP42M1SI
Sony	KEP37M1S
Sony	KDEP37XS1
Sony	KDEP42SX1
Sony	KDEP42MRX1
Vision	PM4230
Toshiba	42WP46B

LCD TELEVISIONS

MAKE	MODEL
DMTech	DML4117WD
DMTech	DML4120SD
Hitachi	17LD4220
Hitachi	28LD5200
JVC	LT17C50
JVC	LT17D50
JVC	LT23C50
JVC	LT26D50S
JVC	LT32D50S
LG	RZ15LA70
LG	RZ20LA70
LG	RZ17LZ40
LG	RZ26LZ50
Loewe	MIMO15C
Panasonic	TX20LA2
Panasonic	TX22LX2
Panasonic	TX26LXD1
Panasonic	TX32LXD1
Philips	15PF8946
Philips	17PF9946
Philips	23PF8946
Philips	23PF9946
Philips	30PF9946
Philips	32PF9976
Philips	23HM8821
Philips	32PF9986
Philips	37PF9986
Philips	42PF9986C
Samsung	LE15E31SX
Samsung	LW20M11CX
Samsung	LW17N23NX
Sanyo	27LC3
Sanyo	30LD3
Sharp	LC15SH1E
Sharp	LC15L1E
Sharp	LC26GA3E
Sharp	LC20SH1E
Sharp	LC32GD1E
Sharp	LC37GD1E
Sony	KLV17HR3B
Sony	KLV17HR3S
Sony	KLV20SR3S
Sony	KLVL23M1SI
Sony	KLVL23M1B
Sony	KLV21SG2
Sony	KLV26HG2
Sony	KLVL32M1SI
Sony	KLVL32M1B
Sony	KDLL32MRX1
Sony	KDLL42MRX1
Toshiba	14VL44B
Toshiba	17WL46B
Toshiba	17WLT46
Toshiba	23WL46
Toshiba	27WL46B
Toshiba	30WL46B
Toshiba	32WL48P

A/V SYSTEMS

MAKE	MODEL
Aiwa	AVJX33
Denon	DHT500SD
Denon	DHT550SD
JVC	THS3
JVC	THS5
JVC	THSW8
JVC	THA75R
JVC	QP112AL
JVC	QPF30AL
JVC	QPF70AL
JVC	QPF90AL
LG	LHT6740
Panasonic	SCHT520
Panasonic	SCHT05
Panasonic	SCHT870
Panasonic	SCHT25R
Panasonic	SCHT1500
Panasonic	SCST1S
Panasonic	SCHT37R
Philips	LX3900SA
Pioneer	DCS222
Pioneer	DCS323
Pioneer	DCS222MR
Pioneer	HC51S
Pioneer	DCS424
Pioneer	NSDV1000
Sanyo	DCTS780
Sony	DAVD150
Sony	HTP1200
Sony	DAVSB200
Sony	HTDDW860
Sony	DAVSB300
Sony	DAVSR1
Sony	DAVSB500W
Sony	DAVSR3
Sony	DAVSR2
Sony	HTR6100
Sony	DAVSR4W
Sony	DAVLF1
Thomson	DPL915VD
Toshiba	SD44HK
Yamaha	DVXS100
Yamaha	DVXS120

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HD ready What Is HDTV?

HDTV is touted as the biggest jump in television broadcasting technology since the advent of the colour TV. Having proved itself for years in the USA and Japan, it is due to hit the UK, through BSkyB, sometime in 2006.

Skipping the technical jargon, HDTV will essentially increase the picture detail by approximately 4 times of that currently seen in current analogue and digital broadcasts, whilst providing full Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound on certain broadcasts, such as movies.

Panasonic 42" Widescreen Plasma

with Built-in Digital 'Freeview' TV Tuner

• 852 x 480 Pixel Resolution • Viera 3D Colour Management System • G8 Progressive Plasma Panel • Nicam Stereo • Built-in DVB Tuner, Speakers and Stand

Model No. TH42PE50CAB

INSTORE PRICE: £2199.99
£1567.99 INC VAT
MAINLAND DELIVERY £30

Panasonic 32" Widescreen LCD TV

with Built-in Freeview Tuner

• 1366 x 768 Pixel Resolution • Viera Colour Management System • High Definition Ready • Built-in Tuner, Speakers and Table Top Stand • Nicam Stereo Sound • NTSC Playback **Model No. TX32LXD52**

INSTORE PRICE: £1479.99
£1149.99 INC VAT
MAINLAND DELIVERY £25

HITACHI 42" Widescreen Plasma

with Nicam Stereo Sound System

• 1024 x 1024 Pixel Resolution • HDMI and DVI Connections • Built-in Tuner, Speakers and Table Top Stand • Fastext • 3x SCART Sockets • On-Screen Display

Model No. 42PD7200

INSTORE PRICE: £2499.99
£2179.99 INC VAT
MAINLAND DELIVERY £30

SONY 42" Widescreen Plasma Television

with Built-in Tuner, Speakers and Stand

• Virtual Dolby Pro-Logic • High Definition Ready • 8 Page EPG • A Set-Up • HDMI Input • Fastext • AV Inputs **Model No. KDEV42A1**

INSTORE PRICE: £1999.99
£1529.99 INC VAT
MAINLAND DELIVERY £30

SONY 32" Widescreen LCD Television

with Integrated 'Freeview' TV Tuner

• 1366 x 768 Pixel Resolution • Dolby Pro-Logic Surround Sound • Electronic Program Guide • Built-in Speakers and Table Top Stand **Model No. KDLS32A12**

INSTORE PRICE: £1399.99
£1139.99 INC VAT
MAINLAND DELIVERY £25

Goodmans 42" Widescreen Plasma Television

with Built-in Tuner, Speakers and Stand

• 852 x 480 Pixel Resolution • Nicam Stereo Sound • 2 Way Speaker System • Fastext Facility • 2 SCART Sockets • S-VHS Outputs **Model No. GTV42P**

INSTORE PRICE: £1199.99
£999.99 INC VAT
MAINLAND DELIVERY £30

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Model No. THR3

INSTORE PRICE: £499.99
£369.99 INC VAT
MAINLAND DELIVERY £10

SONY DVD Home Cinema Kit
with AV SYNC (Lip Sync) Function

SAVE £80!

directlinx F32

• 1000w RMS Audio Output • Dual DVD RW Playback • Dolby Digital, DTS and Dolby Pro-Logic II Decoding • S-Master Full Digital Amplifier • Precision Cinema Progressive Scan
Model No. DAVDZ500F

INSTORE PRICE: £449.99
£369.99 INC VAT
MAINLAND DELIVERY £10

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Panasonic DVD Home Cinema Kit
with PAL Progressive Scan Function

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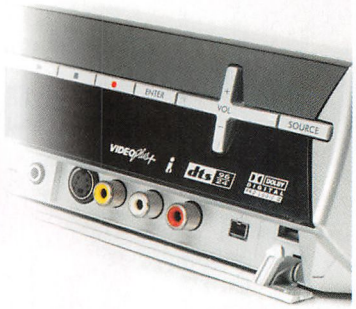
JVC TH-R3

David Smith is delighted to find an RGB input on this JVC recording cinema system but finds his brow furrowing when he has to do something useful with it...



Connect a camcorder or games console via the front inputs

This undeniably stylish system from JVC comes with a beguiling price tag and a promising feature count, so why do we approach it with caution?

Quite simply, it's because every DVD recorder we've yet seen from the company has failed to offer an RGB Scart input. A quick rummage through the instruction manual and... at last! There is indeed an RGB-capable Scart input, but even now JVC seems a bit confused by the whole thing, offering 'Video/RGB', 'S-video/RGB' and 'SAT/RGB' options.

The SAT option is for continued loopthrough of a set-top signal when the system is shut down, so that will be the best option for many.

looks & features

With that major issue out of the way it is easier to admire the design of this system. The main deck is svelte, yet it packs a hefty wallop if the spec sheet is anything to go by – 2 x 140W to the front stereo pair, with 130W each for the centre and two surrounds.

The active subwoofer carries its own 140W power supply and is attached to the main unit by an umbilical cord.

The sub houses the colour-coded springclip terminals for the speaker system, while the main unit plays host to all other connections. These include a DV input at the front, component video outputs at the rear and both optical and electrical digital audio outputs.

The speakers are slimline floorstanders, delivered in two pieces but easily fastened together.

The satellite speakers all carry a pair of 55mm cones, with a frequency range quoted at 90Hz-20kHz. The front and centre boxes are magnetically shielded.

The identical driver complements the coherence of the soundstage, but whether such small speakers will be able to handle the power thrown at them remains to be seen.

> "The main deck is svelte, yet it packs a hefty wallop if the spec sheet is anything to go by"

The sub carries a side-firing 160mm bass driver and frequency response is quoted at 30Hz-200Hz, which should be enough to impart quite a rumble.

Sound formats include Dolby Digital, DTS, DTS 96/24 and Pro-Logic II. The 6.1-channel versions of these formats are not available in pure form, although a 'virtual' surround back speaker setting is available for use with EX and ES soundtracks.

For recording, DVD-RAM and -RW discs in VR mode offer the greatest flexibility when it comes to editing, while -R and -RW video mode discs are better for compatibility with other players. RAM discs also offer simultaneous recording and playback, and the added bonus of playback of a programme while it is being recorded.

Four record settings offer 1hr, 2hr, 4hr and 6hr of capacity on a single-sided disc, while a Free Rate mode can further extend that to as much as 8hr.

ease of use

This is something of a mixed effort from JVC. An automatic speaker setup function, which requires just a clap of the hand, is very welcome, and editing functions on DVD recordings are simple.

On the other hand, the manual is at times boggling, never more so than when telling you what to set your input Scart to.

It also often requires some unusual button presses on the crammed remote to perform a simple task. For instance, there is a 'Progressive' button for prog scan signals, but rather than simply pressing it to turn the function on or off, you have to switch the remote to 'Audio' mode, press the 'DVD' button and then hold the progressive button down for three seconds.

Speaker settings can be easily adjusted (with the help of a test tone) and we dare say that once you get used to the foibles the system will work smoothly.

performance

Performance itself is blighted by some very spooky goings on. First things first, the deck is capable of recording a beautiful RGB image, with biting clarity and every bit as much detail as there is on the original broadcast.

Details

FEATURES

Recording formats: DVD-RAM/-R/-RW
Hard-disk capacity: n/a
Recording modes: Five
Max. recording time: 8hr
Non-linear editing: Yes
TV tuner: Analogue
Timer: one-month/eight-event
GuidePlus/ShowView: No/Yes
Set-top box control: No
Other features: Prog scan output; Dolby Digital/DTS/DTS 96/24/Pro-Logic 2; 2 x 140W front power; 3 x 130W satellites; 140W subwoofer; slow-motion playback; chasing playback; live chaptering; VideoPlus; AM/FM RDS tuner; playlist editing; dimensions: 435(w) x 70(h) x 318(d)mm; weight: 3.6kg

SOCKETS

DV input; S-video input; composite video input; stereo audio input; component video output for PAL prog scan; 2 x Scart (RGB in/out); optical digital audio input; electrical digital audio output; subwoofer connection terminal; AM/FM antennae connection; RF in/out

CONTACT

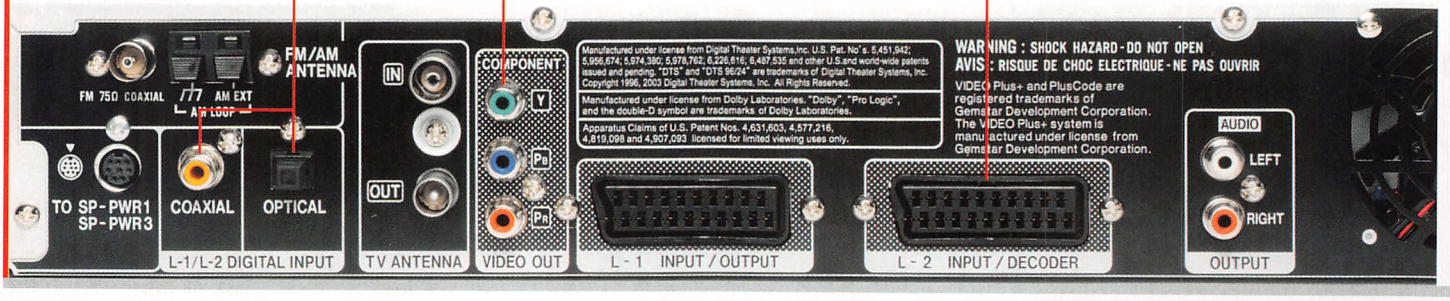
0870 330 5000
www.jvc.co.uk

Key connections

Digital audio outputs
These come in both flavours: optical and electrical

Component video outputs
For piping PAL progressive scan to a compatible screen for cinematic images

RGB Scart input/output
Pristine recordings and playback can be achieved with these common sockets



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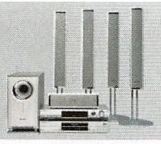

PANASONIC SC-HT37R
Considerably more expensive, but you'll get better sound quality and the benefit of an HDD/DVD recorder combi. Reviewed: Dec '04

PIONEER DVR-433H
You could also opt for an HDD/DVD recorder deck and partner it with a better sound system. Reviewed: Issue 298

Having realised the importance of an RGB Scart input, this JVC falls down due to lacklustre audio

Remote

The remote control is a button-strewn headache

Looks ★★★★★
Layout ★★★★★
Labelling ★★★★★

Colours are clean and there are no artefacts to worry about.

The story remains positive right down the recording options. Detail begins to suffer, inevitably, but the image remains watchable and the 6hr setting is one of the best we've seen, with no strobe effect and still very respectable detail.

Editing produces fairly smooth edit points and the ability to pause recordings and add chapter marks on the fly is welcome. Playback of pre-recorded DVDs is very good as well.

Now for the bad news. When hooked up to a Sky+ box we found the system played happily, but when we switched it into standby mode and reactivated it, there was a distinct lip-sync problem.

Listening to our TV's audio at the same time as the JVC system highlighted this quite clearly. When we activated the 'Navigate' function (which displays titles on a DVD) the lip-sync error cleared up, but once we put the deck into standby once more the problem returned.

Also, the system did not consistently trigger our reference Sony widescreen TV. Sometimes a recording or loopthrough signal would be in widescreen, and sometimes it would be in a compressed 4:3 ratio.

These foibles make the system awkward to live with, but the audio is probably a bigger criticism.

The satellite speakers deliver a fairly harsh sound, with dialogue sounding brittle and lively soundtracks being a test for the ears.

The subwoofer does a decent job (although it needs to be toned down) and adds some warmth to the sound, but the overall effect is disjointed, a soundstage of two parts that do not convincingly mesh.

Playing at high volumes exacerbates the problem, while keeping things to sensible levels does help matters.

conclusion

At the price, and considering the functionality of the system, some of the problems we encountered can be waved aside.

Overall, however, there is a lack of quality from the audio side, an unwieldy nature to the operation of the system and one or two puzzling anomalies that look like they need some further work from JVC.

There are certainly more assured performers out there at this price point or for a little more ■

Fact file

- Component video outputs for PAL progressive scan
- Dolby Digital/DTS/DTS 96/24
- 140W active subwoofer
- AM/FM RDS tuner
- 2 RGB Scarts

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD
DVD playback; DVD recording

WHAT'S BAD
Awkward operation; average sound

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL VERDICT
This system has some impressive qualities and some downright frustrating ones

★★★★★

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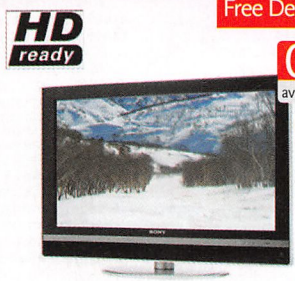

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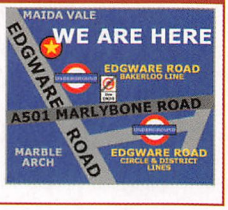

26in LCD TVs

While LCDs are becoming a 'must-have' when it comes to choosing a new TV, not everybody has the space (or budget!) to spare for a massive set. This month's group test features half a dozen models with more modest proportions...

ON TEST

LOEWE SPHEROS R26	078
PANASONIC TX-26LXD52	079
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CONCLUSION	086

26in LCD IDTV • Approx price: £1,850

BEST What Video & Widescreen TV BUY

Fact file

- 26in widescreen LCD TV
- 1366 x 768 native resolution
- 800:1 quoted contrast ratio
- 450cd/m2 brightness
- Built-in digital TV tuner

Loewe Spheros R 26

Details

FEATURES

Screen size and shape: 26in, 16:9
Tuner Type: Digital and analogue
Sound system: Nicam stereo
Resolution: 1366 x 768
HD Ready: Yes
Quoted contrast ratio: 800:1
Quoted brightness: 450cd/m2
Screen dimensions (no stand): 684(w) x 507(h) x 95(d)mm
Weight: 20kg
Other features: Headphone volume; autotuning; recording memory; now/next information; off/wake up timers

SOCKETS

HDMI input; CAM slot; S-video input; composite video input; stereo audio input x 2; headphone jack; 2 Scarts (one RGB); component video input; RF jack

CONTACT

0800 027 6465
www.loewe-uk.com

TEST DATA

For a full explanation of test data, please see page 116

Test	Rating
Colour	Excellent
Geometry	Excellent
Frequency	Excellent

It's always puzzled us why a brand as normally cutting edge as Loewe should have failed to launch a TV with an integrated digital tuner. So it's with a sense of anticipation that we look at this 26in Spheros R 26 IDTV.

Spheros TVs are classed under Loewe's 'Reference' category, so it's no surprise to find the R 26's build quality and looks hitting genuine benchmark standards. Stunning.

Connectivity continues the theme by including HDMI, component video jacks, and one for a PC on top of the usual Scart and S-video alternatives. There's also a CAM slot for adding extra functionality – such as Top Up TV – along with its digital tuner.

The HDMI and component jacks raise the prospect of this screen being HD Ready – and happily the Spheros offers a native widescreen resolution of 1366 x 768 and compatibility with all the key HD formats.

A search for further interesting features, though, raises a shock: no support for Freeview's 7-day electronic programme guide. But thankfully, this isn't a terminal situation, since Loewe assures us that the EPG will arrive via a broadcast software upgrade by the end of January at the latest.

A largely unsuccessful extended search for further features uncovers another disappointment, too: an over-complicated onscreen menu structure, and a nasty 'rocker-ball' menu navigator on the remote.

performance

The Spheros R 26's performance puts us right back in high spirits, however. Particularly stunning is the picture's sharpness. Every last pixel of a true high-def source is immaculately visible. Even more startling is the definition and clarity the TV manages even with standard off-air Freeview channels. What's more, there appears to be hardly any grain or dot crawl.

Colours are sensational too. Peak saturations look incredibly solid and rich, while subtler tones look natural, subtly blended, and perfectly shaded.

The picture enjoys exceptional depth, too, thanks to these colour subtleties, and unusually (for a small screen) deep black levels that avoid almost entirely the common problems of greying over or blue undertones.

Elsewhere motion is handled impeccably, with no significant smear, judder or blurring.

In fact we spotted only one incy wincy picture problem: minor pools of spillage from the backlight creeping into the image's bottom corners. But these could be specific to our review sample, and we'd estimate they became visible for barely one per cent of our testing.

Sonically the Spheros R 26 is a chip off the old Loewe block. The bass, fully rounded treble, soundstage width, rich dialogue and expansive mid-range help it to deliver as fine an audio performance as we've heard on a 26in TV.

Ultimately, the Loewe Spheros R 26 is something of a conundrum. On the one hand it's a touch expensive, and its operating system and 'rocker-ball' remote control are almost wilfully unhelpful. On the other hand, its build quality is imperious and its all-round performance peerless. So whether you take the plunge or not probably depends on whether you're or not well-heeled enough for money to be no object in the pursuit of quality ■

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD

Pictures off all sources; design; connectivity

WHAT'S BAD

Very unintuitive operating system; pricey; no 7-day EPG support

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Features	★★★★½
Ease of use	★★★★½
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL VERDICT

Has a few operating foibles – but at least our frustrations were rewarded by a stunning all-round performance

★★★★★

Fact file

- 26in LCD TV
- 1366 x 768 native resolution
- HD Ready
- 800:1 claimed contrast
- Built-in digital tuner

Panasonic TX-26LXD52

Details

FEATURES

Screen size and shape: 26in, 16:9
Tuner Type: Digital and analogue
Sound system: Nicam stereo with ambience mode
Resolution: 1366 x 768
HD Ready: Yes
Quoted contrast ratio: 800:1
Quoted brightness: 550cd/m2
Screen dimensions (with stand): 663(w) x 556(h) x 300(d)mm
Weight: 18kg
Other features: autotuning; teletext; MPEG and standard noise reduction; colour management; Q-Link; off timer

SOCKETS

HDMI input; 3 Scarts (2 RGB); RF input; S-video input; stereo audio input x 2; composite video input; headphone jack; stereo audio output; component video input; CAM slot

CONTACT

08705 357357
www.panasonic.co.uk

TEST DATA

For a full explanation of test data, please see page 116

Test	Rating
Colour	Excellent
Geometry	Excellent
Frequency response	Excellent

We've always felt that the gap in functionality and price between the two prongs of Panasonic's LCD TV range (LXD500 and LXD50) was a bit large. And it seems that perhaps Panny shares our concerns, as it has just unleashed a new 'middle' way: the LXD52 range – represented by the 26in TX-26LXD52.

From the outside, the 26LXD52 has more in common with its cheaper LXD50 sibling. It looks identical, differing from the top-range LXD500 via its slimmer black screen frame and chunkier silver subsection.

Thankfully, from here on in the 26LXD52 shifts much closer to the LXD500. This impression begins with its connectivity, which includes an HDMI jack alongside a set of component video inputs – raising hopes that this TV will be HD Ready. It's nice, too, to find three Scarts. There's no PC input or SD photocard slot like on the LXD500, though.

The 26LXD52 follows through on its connections' HD Readiness with a sufficiently high native resolution of 1366 x 768, and compatibility with all the necessary HD formats.

Its biggest feature is probably its digital tuner. This is backed up by support for the 7-day Freeview EPG that includes genre filtering and direct timer event setting. Other tricks include colour management for automatically optimising colour saturations and tone, plus both 'normal' and MPEG noise reduction (handy for reducing blockiness in lower-quality digital broadcasts). The LXD52 does, however, lack the LXD500's picture-in-picture options.

performance

The LXD52 matches the excellent LXD500 for picture quality, though. This means pictures are remarkably flexible, looking great with all sources, from the analogue tuner right through to pristine digitally-fed high definition. In fact, it's an all-rounder of positively Flintoffian proportions.

Getting more specific, the TV boasts terrifically bright and well saturated colours that also score over those of many rivals by being 100 per cent natural at all times – even during dark scenes.

More good news comes with the TV's fine detail response, which picks out tremendous amounts of texture during HD viewing, but also delivers sharpness with notoriously soft digital TV broadcasts.

There's an almost complete dearth of picture noise with all sources too, and only the rarest trace of the smearing that can accompany motion on LCD TVs.

This TV also enjoys very good black levels by 26in LCD standards, giving dark scenes exceptional scale and plenty of easily visible background detailing. In fact, now we think about it, there really isn't anything bad to say about the 26LXD52's pictures at all.

All this is backed up by a terrific audio performance, too. The TV's unassuming looking speakers will blow your socks off with their deep, rounded bass, massively wide but controlled soundstage, rich vocal tones, and high but never harsh trebles. If there's a 26in LCD TV that sounds better, we ain't heard it.

Panasonic has pitched its new mid-range set perfectly. The only problem might be just how heavily this cracking newcomer could eat into sales of its other two ranges! ■

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD

Pictures; sound; design; operating system; digital tuner

WHAT'S BAD

Could be cheaper; no PC connection

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL VERDICT

Another stellar Panasonic LCD TV with maybe the best mix yet of performance and features

★★★★★

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Fact file

- 26in widescreen LCD TV
- 1280 x 768 native resolution
- 500:1 claimed contrast
- Built-in DVD player
- Built-in digital tuner

DMTech DML4126WDT

Details

FEATURES

Screen size and shape: 26in, 16:9
Tuner Type: Digital and analogue
Sound system: Nicam stereo
Resolution: 1280 x 768
HD Ready: Yes
Quoted contrast ratio: 500:1
Quoted brightness: 450cd/m2
Screen dimensions (minus stand): 695(w) x 529(h) x 122(d)mm
Weight: 16kg
Other features: Built-in DVD player; picture-in-picture; PC compatibility; 7-day EPG support; MP3 playback; HDCD playback; picture file playback; 2 x 8W audio power

SOCKETS

Component video inputs; composite video in/out; S-video in; stereo audio input x 2; headphone jack; 2 Scarts (one RGB); D-Sub PC input; digital audio output; RF input; stereo audio output; PC audio input; DVi input

CONTACT

0208 232 3335
www.xiod.co.uk

TEST DATA

For a full explanation of test data, please see page 116

Test	Rating
Colour	Good
Geometry	Excellent
Frequency response	Good

Back in issue 296 we looked at and were impressed by DMTech's DML4126WD LCD TV/DVD combi. And now it's back packing even more of a value punch with a built-in digital tuner and HD Ready logo.

Aside from the addition of a logo or two, the new digital 4126WDT looks identical to its older brother. This is no bad thing ,since the deep black screen frame atop a crisp, silver speaker section and desktop stand is very easy on the eye.

The DVD player is mounted vertically down the TV's rear right side, while further round the back is a healthy roster of connections that includes component video inputs, a PC port, two Scarts and, most significantly, an HDCP-enabled DVI jack. Together with the component jack, a native resolution of 1280 x 768 and compatibility with all the key HD formats, this earns the 4126WDT its HD Ready spurs. The one serious connection absentee is a CAM slot. So aside from the odd uploadable update, there's no way of adding extra digital functionality, like Top-Up TV.

Features associated with the 4126WDT's DVD player include playback of MP3s, HDCDs and picture discs. Those associated with the TV are largely restricted to a picture in picture system and noise reduction. And digital tuner features include a superbly presented and fast 7-day electronic programme guide, and full MHEG text compatibility. Note, though, that you can't set recording on external recorders from the EPG.

It's rather a pity, though, that all these features have to be accessed by a remote that's overcrowded with poorly labelled, overly small and unintuitively laid out buttons.

performance

The 4126WDT's performance is predictably identical to that of its analogue tuner-only sibling. Which isn't particularly great news...

Good points on the picture side include plenty of brightness, unusually vivid and aggressive colour saturations, respectable black levels, fair greyscaling and colour gradation, and unexpectedly clean, artefact-free playback from the built-in DVD deck.

The new digital tuner is impressive too. In fact, the lack of noise in Freeview pictures is outstanding, and this is backed up by unusual stability and colour richness to great effect.

On the downside, skin tones across all sources can look too smooth, making people look like a Madame Tussauds waxwork. Also, while black levels are above average, they are afflicted by a slightly bluish tone that can flatten the picture out a touch during dark scenes. Next, the picture is rather on the soft side, failing to do full justice to HD sources via either the digital or component video jacks.

Finally, horizontal motion judders across the screen rather than moving smoothly like it should.

The 4126WDT's sound isn't anything special either .Your typical daytime TV fodder sounds fine, but anything more demanding soon reveals trebles as harsh and bass in short supply.

While the 4126WDT is hardly the last word in performance, it is currently the last word in one-box convenience. What's more, it delivers its considerable multitasking talents at a very competitive price ■

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD

Price; DVD player and digital tuner performance; design

WHAT'S BAD

Remote control; juddery motion; lack of sharpness; no CAM upgrade slot

Picture	★★★★☆
Sound	★★★★☆
Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL VERDICT

Versatile good-looking telly and wallet-friendly price tag. Only an average performer though

★★★★☆

26in LCD TV • Approx price: £800

Sharp LC-26P50E

Fact file

- 26in LCD TV
- 960 x 540 'PAL-optimised' resolution
- 800:1 quoted contrast ratio
- 450cd/m2 brightness
- HD capable

Details

FEATURES

Screen size and shape: 26in, 16:9
Tuner Type: Analogue
Sound system: Nicam stereo, with surround option
Resolution: 960 x 540
HD Ready: No
Quoted contrast ratio: 800:1
Quoted brightness: 450cd/m2
Screen dimensions: 674(w) x 553(h) x 262(d)mm
Weight: 15.5kg
Other features: Progressive scan; film mode; black stretch; backlight adjust; teletext; 3D Y/C; pic freeze; 2 x 10W audio power

SOCKETS

2 Scarts (2 RGB); S-video in; composite video in; component video in; HDMI in; RF in; stereo audio in/out; headphone jack

CONTACT

0800 1385051
www.sharp.co.uk

TEST DATA

For a full explanation of test data, please see page 116

Test	Rating
Colour	Excellent
Geometry	Excellent
Frequency response	Good

High definition is a beautiful thing. Nobody who has seen it can deny that. But it's an expensive and complicated thing so there will be huge numbers who really won't be bitten by the HD bug at all. And it's precisely these people that Sharp is aiming at with its LC-26P50E.

Not only is this TV not HD Ready but it's proud of the fact! Sharp has deliberately given it a native resolution of just 960 x 540, since while this isn't sufficient for native, unscaled HD pictures, it's perfect for showing unscaled PAL, standard definition pictures. Well, nearly perfect; actually a few lines have to be cut off the 576 visible lines of the full PAL picture – but during our tests we never actually missed them.

The home for this PAL-friendly machine is a pretty one, looking a vision in its black screen frame and dramatic, light silver trim.

Connectivity is good too, with HDMI and component video jacks showing that this TV has not forgotten about HD altogether. More down to earth jacks include a pair of Scarts, an S-video port and a composite video input. Unfortunately, there's no PC connectivity.

Features beyond the unique PAL-optimised pixel count are fairly numerous, with highlights including a back light adjustment; optional 3D comb filter; noise reduction; black stretch option, and a film mode for enhanced motion on DVD.

performance

To be honest we were sceptical about the TV's PAL-optimised claims, thinking that maybe they were just a fancy excuse for the 26P50E's low resolution panel. But the quality of the PAL performance suggests there might be something to Sharp's argument after all.

The main reason we say this is the simple clarity of standard definition PAL pictures, at least via the RGB Scart. The images from a DVD deck and Sky Digital receiver both look remarkably clean, with no softness, no motion smearing, no dot crawl, no colour noise, no edge over-emphasis... all problems commonly attributed to the scaling of PAL signals to fit higher or lower resolution panels. The result is possibly the most polished PAL picture we've seen on a 26in LCD TV.

On the down side, high-definition pictures, particularly 720p ones, don't look quite as pin-sharp as we've seen them on higher resolution panels. They're still very pleasing – a function, perhaps, of the simple and therefore scaling-friendly mathematical relationships between the 540 lines of the TV screen and the 720 and 1080 lines of HD footage. But the fact remains that this is not the ultimate HD machine.

More unexpectedly, it's not outstandingly brilliant with tuner pictures either, leaving them looking a touch soft, while their colours look slightly waxy. They are still impressively free from noise, though.

Sonically, it is a fair to middling performer, capable of handling most normal TV viewing, but lacking the raw power and dynamic range to avoid sounding rather flat with action.

Overall, while not the best option out there for HD gurus, if you're one of the millions whose TV diet is likely to mostly or exclusively comprise of standard definition sources, then the PAL-friendly 26P50 simply cannot be ignored ■

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD
RGB-fed PAL pictures; design; price

WHAT'S BAD
No PC input

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★½
Features	★★★★½
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★½

OVERALL VERDICT
An almost irresistible option for 'ordinary' TV viewers, though HD fans should look elsewhere

★★★★½

Fact file

- 26in 16:9 LCD TV
- 1366 x 768 native resolution
- HD Ready
- HDMI input
- 1,200:1 claimed contrast

LG 26LX2R

Details

FEATURES

Screen size and shape: 26in, 16:9
Tuner Type: Analogue
Sound system: Nicam stereo with SRS Trusurround
Resolution: 1366 x 768
HD Ready: Yes
Quoted contrast ratio: 1,200:1
Quoted brightness: 500cd/m2
Screen dimensions (on stand): 876(w) x 585.5(h) x 115(d)mm
Weight: 20kg
Other features: autotuning; teletext; XD Engine; Fleshtone, greentone, bluetone adjusts; Cinema progressive mode; noise reduction; Dynamic Eye auto adjust; picture in picture options

SOCKETS

HDMI input; RS232; DVI input (with HDCP, switches between PC/video); 2 Scarts (1 RGB); S-video in; composite video in; component video in; RF jack; 3 stereo audio in; stereo audio output; remote control jack; headphone jack

CONTACT

0870 607 5544
www.lge.co.uk

TEST DATA

For a full explanation of test data, please see page 116

Test	Rating
Colour	Excellent
Geometry	Excellent
Frequency response	Excellent

Korea's current dominance of the LCD market looks set to continue. Samsung has been wowing us with its R41 range of LCDs, and now fellow Korean LG is getting in on the act with its aggressively priced 26LX2R.

LG's 26in model looks similar and equally gorgeous to Samsung's 26R41BDX, down to the triangulated silver subsection beneath the glossy black screen surround – the main difference is that LG's speakers are to the screen's side while Samsung's are inside the 'triangle'.

Connections include some nice surprises an HDMI and DVI input, both switchable between PC and video. Also present are two Scarts, high definition-capable component video inputs, and S-video and composite video alternatives.

The component and digital video jacks are supported by a native resolution of 1366 x 768 and compatibility with all HD formats that matter to make the screen HD Ready.

Other features of interest include an unusually high 1,200:1 quoted contrast ratio, dedicated adjustments for fleshtone, greentone and bluetone, picture-in-picture options, and LG's proprietary XD Engine picture processing. This processing allegedly boosts: image clarity; colour saturations/tone; contrast; brightness; colour gradation and grayscaling; and frame rate handling during movie viewing.

performance

The 26LX2R's pictures are generally very good. RGB digital broadcast feeds (with which the TV looks its best) from a Freeview or Sky receiver enjoy exceptional sharpness for starters, producing a picture that's crisp, textured and detailed. Happily this isn't unduly hampered by much smearing interference over motion either, suggesting that the screen's response time is up to the job.

Colours are vivid too, enjoying both bright, full saturations and consistently natural toning. Couple this with some subtle colour blends, and you've got an image that's replete with solidity and depth.

Picture noise is at a premium, with a dearth of common nasties like colour banding, grain or dot crawl. Even the MPEG blocking noise seen on some other LG sets during HDMI viewing is largely absent.

HD playback benefits from this general lack of noise, since it allows the picture to look clean and pristine without attendant dot crawl.

There are only two things that let the screen down: it looks a bit mushy with analogue tuner fodder, and its black level response is only average. Dark areas look solid and black enough during most TV viewing, but tend to grey over in dark movies, resulting in a one-dimensional image lacking background detail. Don't get us wrong; black levels aren't bad by LCD standards but we've seen better.

Audio is fair to middling. It's good at picking out subtle details in a soundmix, and paints an impressively wide sonic picture. Voices sound clean, too, if a little 'electronic'. But there's a fairly severe lack of bass that leaves action sounding harsh.

Ultimately, the 26LX2R has enough weaknesses to bring it up short of a Best Buy. But it's still great value – especially if you'll mostly be watching standard-def RGB Sky or Freeview feeds on it ■

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD

RGB pictures; sharpness; design; price; connectivity

WHAT'S BAD

Black levels at times; no digital tuner; average sound

Picture	★★★★½
Sound	★★★½☆
Features	★★★★½
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★½

OVERALL VERDICT

Good looking, easy to use, aggressively priced and well connected LCD TV

★★★★½

26in LCD TV • Approx price: **£500**

Fact file

- 26in LCD TV
- 1280 x 768 native resolution
- 500:1 quoted contrast ratio
- 450cd/m² brightness
- Two Scarts

Goodmans LD2602

Details

FEATURES

Screen size and shape: 26in, 16:9
Tuner Type: Analogue
Sound system: Nicam stereo with wide option
Resolution: 1280 x 768
HD Ready: No
Quoted contrast ratio: 500:1
Quoted brightness: 450cd/m2
Screen dimensions: 797(w) x 470(h) x 245(d)mm
Weight: 14.3kg
Other features: Autotuning; teletext; noise reduction

SOCKETS

2 Scarts (1 RGB); RF input; S-video input; stereo audio input; composite video input; headphone jack; stereo audio output

CONTACT

08705 425425
www.comet.co.uk

TEST DATA

For a full explanation of test data, please see page 116

Test	Rating
Colour	Good
Geometry	Excellent
Frequency response	Fair

This being a Goodmans TV, it won't surprise you that it's comfortably the cheapest in this group test. In fact, it's the cheapest 26in LCD anywhere. Does that mean by default that it's also the worst?

It's certainly the ugliest. The drab grey finish and imagination-free styling make it about as pretty as a 1960s apartment block in Moscow.

Its connections leave much to be desired, too. Extensive searching failed to turn up anything more than a couple of Scarts, the tuner input, a stereo audio output, and the usual S-video/composite video fallbacks. There's no component video input, PC input or digital video input, so not only is it not HD Ready, but it can't take any hi-def pictures either. We guess Goodmans might reasonably argue that its target market probably won't have much interest in HD.

Surprisingly, given its price, the LD2602 boasts a high native resolution of 1280 x 768 – though whether this will actually provide much benefit given the TV's lack of HD compatibility is debatable. Other key specs – a claimed 500:1 contrast ratio and 450cd/m2 brightness – are par for the budget course.

Elsewhere, the LD2602 packs practically no features beyond the basic fundamentals. In fact, pretty much the only unexpected surprise this TV has up its sleeve is its really rather nice picture quality...

performance

Colours are both vivid and naturally toned, with the TV doing a sterling job of avoiding the green undertone and over-ripe flavour seen on many budget rivals. Even dark scenes look vibrantly and authentically painted.

Also shaming many a more expensive rival is the Goodmans' motion handling. Horizontal movement takes place smoothly, with practically none of the juddering seen on, for instance, the DMTech model.

Yet more good news comes from the picture's freedom from most types of noise, leaving you enjoying a pleasingly direct connection with what you're watching.

Black levels go deeper than anticipated, giving pictures a fair amount of depth and solidity. Really dark movies can still grey over and lose background detail, but for most ordinary TV viewing the LD2602's contrast range is absolutely fine.

The LD2602's pictures are rather source sensitive. The good results reported were mostly seen on RGB-fed DVD or Sky Digital feeds. Using the built-in tuner, pictures soften and smear up considerably. Even the high-grade sources aren't completely free of softness, lacking some of the definition and texture seen on most other sets in this group test.

Other little glitches include some gentle smearing over some moving objects, and occasional moiring noise over fine details.

The TV surpasses our expectations with its audio, though. The soundstage is certainly a touch bass-lite and lacks detail, but voices are always clear and the speakers seldom distort or sound harsh.

In the context of this round-up, the LD2602 has neither the features nor quality to make it onto the winner's podium. But if you can live without high definition, it's much better than we would expect for £500 ■

Ratings

WHAT'S GOOD

Price; pictures in many ways; price; ease of use; price!

WHAT'S BAD

No HD connectivity; slight picture softness, especially via the tuner; drab looks; features

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL VERDICT

Not HD Ready or even HD compatible – but as a straight replacement for an old CRT TV, it's great value

★★★★★

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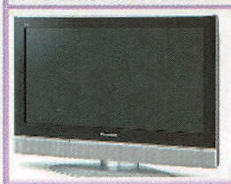

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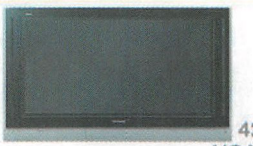

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Conclusion

Such is the overall quality of all six of the 26in TVs in this group test that putting them in some sort of pecking order is difficult to the point of brutality. Pretty much all of them have something special to commend them, be it awesome performance, reams of features, or an amazingly low price tag. But after some lengthy debate, this is how things have finally come out.

In last place we've put the DMTech DMT-4126WDT. This might seem harsh given its exceptionally good price for a TV that includes both a digital tuner and a built-in DVD player. But we made our decision based on the fact that it's marginally the weakest performer of the six – a fact which, in conjunction with its 'all-in-one' combi aspect, means it's probably more suited as a second-room TV than a main one.

In fifth place we've put the Goodmans. Again this seems tough given that it's actually a very solid performer for a price that's over £200 cheaper than that of any of its rivals. In the end its lack of any sort of high-definition support was what tipped the scales against it. If HD doesn't interest you, though, rest assured that this TV will do you fine while saving you a good few bob in the bargain.

In fourth we find the LG 26LX2R. Once more this has some great features to commend it – not least the fact that it's truly HD Ready while only costing £800. But occasional issues with its black levels and a rather underwhelming audio performance were enough to push it into the bottom half.

Third place we've given to Loewe's Spheros 26R. However, please note that it's actually the best picture and sound performer, and if money's no object this is the TV to get. The problem is, we suspect money is an object to many of you, and so its relatively hefty price tag can't just be ignored in trying to put these sets in some sort of order. Its devilishly tricky operating system doesn't help, either…

Second spot goes, perhaps controversially, to Sharp's 26P50E. Even though this screen is only HD compatible rather than fully HD Ready thanks to a deliberate lack of resolution, it still looks very good with HD sources. More importantly, though, it looks better with standard definition sources than any other LCD TV we've seen.

Our winner, though, is Panasonic's TX-26LXD52. In an ideal world this might be a hundred pounds or two cheaper, perhaps, and a PC input would have been appreciated. But in every other way that matters – picture quality with all sources, sound, features, design, future-proofing – it's pretty much immaculate ■

1

Panasonic's TX-26LXD52

OVERALL VERDICT

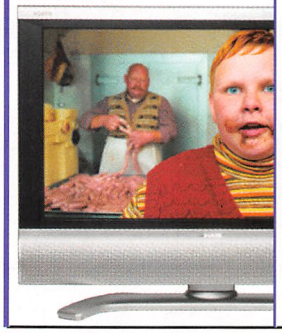
★★★★★

2

Sharp 26P50E

OVERALL VERDICT

★★★★



3

Loewe Spheros 26R

OVERALL VERDICT

★★★★★

4

LG 26LX2R

OVERALL VERDICT

★★★★

5

Goodmans LD2602

OVERALL VERDICT

★★★★

6

DMTech DMT-4126WDT

OVERALL VERDICT

★★★★

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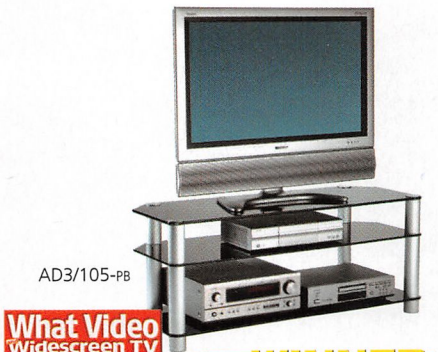

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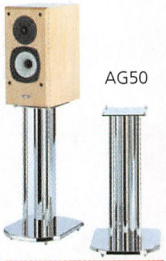

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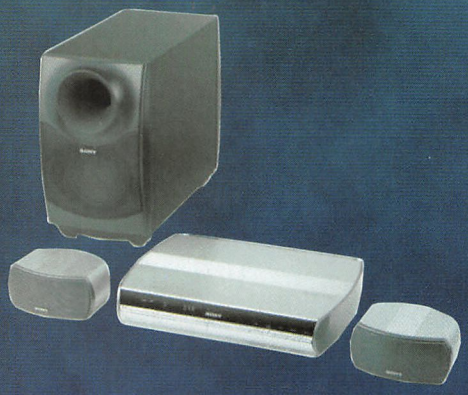

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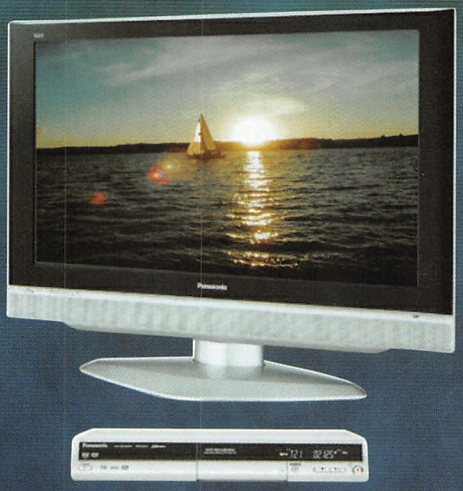

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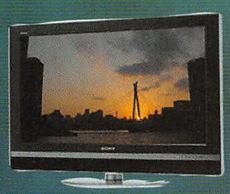

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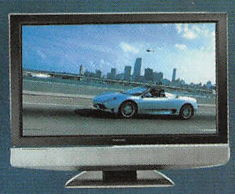

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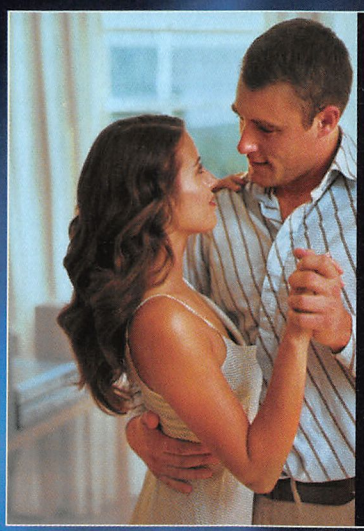

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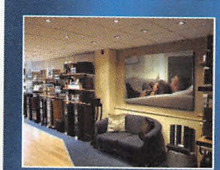

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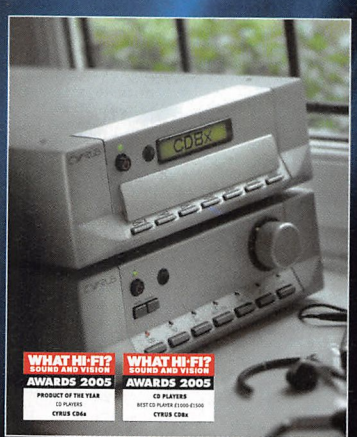

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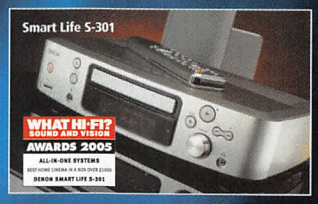
***Added Value Offers - From range available in-store. Not in conjunction with any other offer. ADVERT VALID UNTIL AT LEAST 15/12/2005, E&OE.**

Denon

Denon, Japan's oldest audio company, has established an enviable reputation for the performance of both its hi-fi and home cinema products, winning numerous awards and accolades over the years. Its stylish systems have succeeded in becoming the benchmark by which all other are judged.



DVD-A1XV "The most obvious winner of any category this year has to be Denon's evolutionary step in DVD deck design, the landmark DVD-A1XV... An astonishing piece of kit that has no equals."
AVC-A1XV "It's not often we can't find fault with a product, but as we said in our review, "It not only expands the home cinema envelope, it shreds it and then nukes it for good measure." HOME CINEMA CHOICE • AWARDS 2005

Yamaha

Yamaha is recognised as a world leader in the fields of musical instruments and audio equipment, and in more recent years, home cinema. New models for 2005 include upgraded A/V receivers, amplifers, and DVD players plus the innovative YSP-1 virtual surround speaker.

YAMAHA'S DVD-S2500, DSP-AX757SE & RX-V4600

Pioneer

Pioneer has introduced three new DVD players. The super-slim (49.5mm high) DV-2850, DV-380 and DV-585A. All models are DivX compatible and deliver exceptionally high-quality pictures using a 108 MHz/12-bit Video D/A Converter. The **DV-585A** (Below) is a universal player, compatible with both DVD-Audio and SACD music discs.

REL

In a market packed with subwoofers claiming to deliver the ultimate bass experience, only one brand of sub-bass system can prove its supremacy. With a record of review success stretching back over a decade, REL is acknowledged as the leading provider of deep, clean bass frequencies.

M&K

M&K KS "Wonderful surround sound performance, agile and deep subwoofer."

Enjoy cinema as the director intended with a speaker system that is genuinely designed for surround sound. Every Miller & Kreisel surround sound system is designed around the highest quality centre speaker available, as this critical speaker will reproduce more than 70% of a film soundtrack. Partnered with two identical main speakers, this produces seamless panning across the front soundstage, combined with the remarkable clarity and effortless dynamics that has made M&K the first choice in recording studios worldwide.

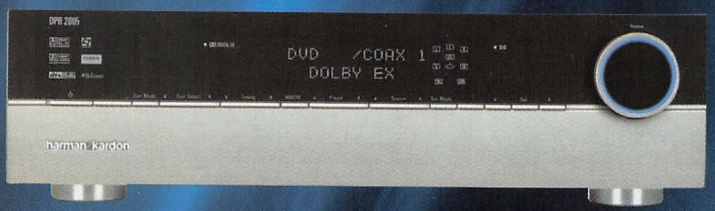
Onkyo

"A Dinky design that offers a vigorous listen, plus reassuringly solid build... Onkyo's CR-505DAB is a fab buy."

Onkyo DS-A1 iPod Connector Dock

Harman Kardon

Harman's 7.1-channel DPR 2005 and DPR 1005 digital path receivers take Harman's groundbreaking digital path receiver platform to new levels of performance and functionality utilising a fully digital signal path from input to output, along with advanced features and technologies.



ESSENTIAL ACCESSORIES

The right accessories can make or break your system. Our carefully selected range, including **QED**, **SOUNDSTYLE** and **GRADO**, will ensure you get the very best performance from your system.

DVD Recorders

Although making digital recordings of TV broadcasts isn't new, the choice, versatility and quality of recorders keep getting better. Our product selection includes DVD only, hybrid DVD/hard-disk and multi-format models.

£ PRICING POLICY

We always try to ensure our prices are highly competitive. In the event you can find the same products and excellent service at a lower price, please bring it to our store managers' attention.

FLEXIBLE FINANCE OPTIONS*

Spread the cost of buying. Flexible finance options are available on the majority of products we stock. *Written details on request. Licensed credit brokers. Minimum balance £400. Subject to status.

PLEASE NOTE

Some products/brands are not available at all stores. Please call to confirm or visit our website before travelling.
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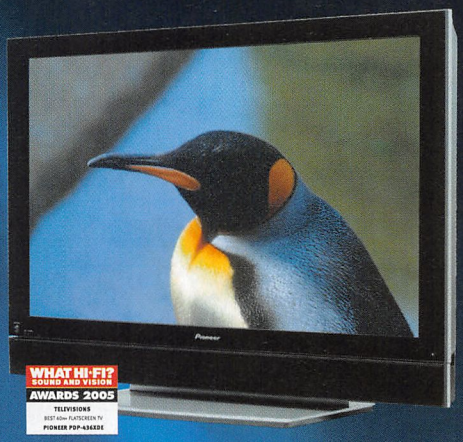
ADVERT VALID UNTIL AT LEAST 15/12/2005, E&OE.

Specialist home cinema

At the heart of any home cinema is its screen: Sevenoaks Sound & Vision can put you in the picture with a selection of flat-panel displays and projection systems. LCD and plasma screens are just a few centimetres thick and come in sizes from a 13inch portable to over 60inches.

SEVENOAKS
SOUND & VISION



Pioneer

Following its highly successful '5' series, Pioneer has unveiled its sixth generation of plasma TVs. The 43" PDP-436XDE and 50" PDP-506XDE models include built-in digital tuners plus dual HDMI inputs.

PDP-436XDE
PLASMA TV

"Pioneer's latest is also its greatest: this is a truly wonderful HD-Ready TV."

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ NOVEMBER 2005

Sharp Aquos

Only Sharp Aquos LCD TV offers so much perfection. With supreme styling, the appeal of the Aquos range is obvious. The Titanium Series combines Sharp's sixth-generation LCD panel with stunning, angular-styling, titanium colour-finish and superb build quality to produce a premium class of LCD idTVs

TITANIUM SERIES LC-45GD1E LCD TV with integrated FREEVIEW

"Sharp's mammoth 45in LCD TV is a testament to the growing viability and performance of large-scale LCD. Its 1,920 x1,080 resolution panel allows high-definition pictures to be viewed without compromise and when exploited to its full potential, the results could see this screen hung in a gallery. Images are so crisp and sharp, it almost makes reality look dull.We think it's inspirational. Go pay homage."**HOME CINEMA CHOICE • AWARDS 2005**

FREEVIEW channel and service subject to coverage. Aerial upgrade may be required.

Panasonic Viera

There seems little doubt that the future of television is flat, and the future of flat is the award-winning VIERA range from the world leaders in screen technology, Panasonic. The VIERA range consists of both LCD and Plasma televisions. New additions to the range include 37, 42 & 50in **PV500** models with support for both high-definition and MPEG-4 recording.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 — TELEVISIONS — BEST 26-30in FLATSCREEN TV — PANASONIC TX26LXD500

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 — TELEVISIONS — BEST 36-40in FLATSCREEN TV — PANASONIC TH37PV500

TH42PV500 PLASMA TV

"All told, Panasonic's new TH42PV500 is a stunning set that's clearly the new class leader."

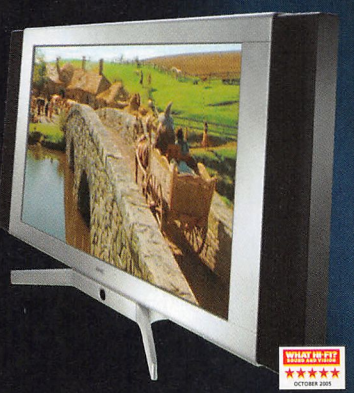
WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ JULY 2005

Loewe

Concept L32 32" LCD TV

With its minimalist, functional design, slim profile and ease of operation, the Concept L32 exudes all of the classic Loewe virtues.

"This HD Ready set boasts 1366x768 resolution and plenty of inputs, including HDMI, component video and two Scarts. It also packs an integrated digital TV tuner, and - as ever with Loewe sets - its speaker set-up is a cut above most rivals... The Concept L32 is immensely attractive: it deserves to sell very well indeed."

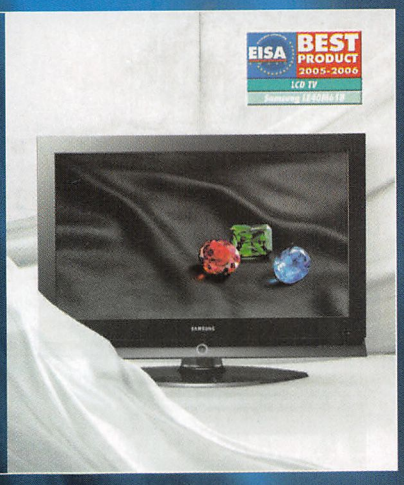


WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ OCTOBER 2005

Samsung

Milano LE40M61B
40" LCD TV

Samsung's New 40" LCD TV (LE40M61B) was honored with an EISA award for its premium display technology in terms of contrast ratio (5000:1), color expression (6.44 billion colors, 92% color gamut for NTSC), viewing angle (178°) and response time (8 ms). Also the model's simple body design focuses the viewer's attention on the screen. On the front of the minimalist design, the speakers are hidden from view in the bottom bezel and nothing distracts from the superb image quality

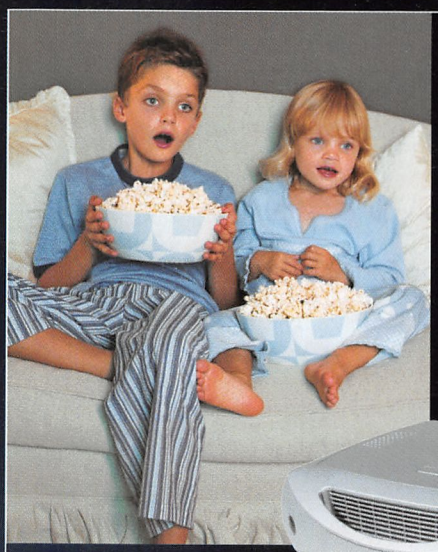


BEST What Video Magazine BUY

Hitachi

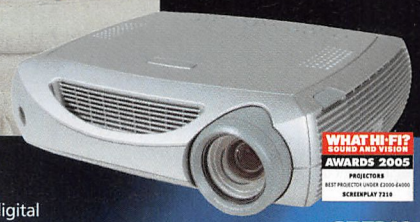
PLATARA 42PD7200 42" PLASMA TV

"Alright, we admit it, we rather like this screen. In fact, it's very difficult to find a reason why anyone hankering for a 42in plasma shouldn't go out and buy one. Five stars for Hitachi and a new standard for affordable excellence for everyone else." **WHAT VIDEO • ISSUE 294**



Projection

If you'd prefer to measure your screen-size in feet, how about one of the new generation of projectors? The latest designs are delivering superb results at increasingly affordable prices - and they're more home friendly than previous projectors, too.



ScreenPlay

From the worldwide leader in digital projection technology and solutions, InFocus® ScreenPlay® DLP™ projectors are changing the face of home cinema offering market-beating performance, specification and value at every price point.

SP7210

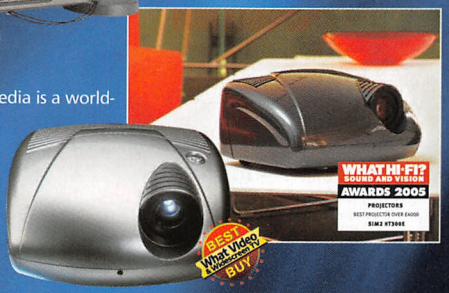
"The new projector's picture is just phenomenal... Looks like ScreenPlay's success story is set to continue."

SP4805

"Another stunning success from ScreenPlay - there's never been a better time to take the big-screen plunge."

Sim2

Sim2 Multimedia is a world-leading manufacturer at the forefront of home cinema technology and a name synonymous with high-end home cinema projection.



HT300E "Spectacular, in a word... Another terrific projector from Italy's finest."
WHAT VIDEO • ISSUE 292

Themescene

Since its launch, the multi-award winning ThemeScene™ brand has rapidly established a five-star reputation for uncompromised image quality.

H30A "There are so many good points it's hard to know where to start... Just how much better can budget DLP projectors get?!"
WHAT VIDEO • ISSUE 292

DVDO iScan™ VP30

The **iScan™ VP30** is a high-definition video processor and A/V hub that converts standard or high definition from your DVD player, VCR, PVR, HD set top box, game console, or PC to any output resolution between 480p and 1080p, including popular HDTV resolutions such as 720p and 1080i.

£ PRICING POLICY

We always try to ensure our prices are highly competitive. In the event you can find the same products and excellent service at a lower price, please bring it to our store managers' attention.

FLEXIBLE FINANCE OPTIONS*

Spread the cost of buying. Flexible finance options are available on the majority of products we stock. *Written details on request. Licensed credit brokers. Minimum balance £400. Subject to status.

PLEASE NOTE

Some products/brands are not available at all stores. Please call to confirm or visit our website before travelling.

*Added Value Offers - From range available in-store. Not in conjunction with any other offer.

ADVERT VALID UNTIL AT LEAST 15/12/2005, E&OE.

Product Selection

Listed below is a small selection of our extensive product range. **Please note:** Some products/brands are not available at all stores. Please call to confirm or see the brand locator at **www.ssav.com** before travelling.

TURNTABLES

Goldring GR2	£ CALL
Linn RANGE	£ CALL
Michell RANGE	£ CALL
Project RANGE	£ CALL
Roksan Radius 5	£ CALL

TUNERS

Arcam RANGE	£ CALL
Cyrus FM X	£ CALL
Denon TU260L MKII	£99.95
Harman Kardon RANGE	£ CALL
Linn RANGE	£ CALL
Marantz RANGE	£ CALL
Pure DRX-701ES DAB	£179.95
Pure DRX-702ES DAB/FM	£229.95
Rotel RANGE	£ CALL

CD PLAYERS

Arcam RANGE	£ CALL
Audiolab RANGE	£ CALL
Cyrus RANGE	£ CALL
Denon DCD485	£119.95
Linn RANGE	£ CALL
Marantz RANGE	£ CALL
Meridian RANGE	£ CALL
Musical Fidelity RANGE	£ CALL
NAD RANGE	£ CALL
Quad RANGE	£ CALL
Roksan RANGE	£ CALL
Rotel RANGE	£ CALL

CD RECORDERS

Yamaha CDR-HD1500	£469.95

AMPLIFIERS

Arcam RANGE	£ CALL
Audiolab RANGE	£ CALL
Cyrus RANGE	£ CALL
Denon PMA355	£159.95
Linn RANGE	£ CALL
Marantz RANGE	£ CALL
Meridian RANGE	£ CALL
Musical Fidelity RANGE	£ CALL
NAD RANGE	£ CALL
Quad RANGE	£ CALL
Roksan RANGE	£ CALL
Rotel RANGE	£ CALL
Yamaha AX396	£169.95

HI-FI SPEAKERS

Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo One	£119.95
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo Three	£229.95
Acoustic Energy Aelite RANGE	£ CALL
Acoustic Energy AE1 MKIII	£ CALL
AVI Neutron IV	£ CALL
B&W RANGE	£ CALL
KEF RANGE	£ CALL
Linn RANGE	£ CALL
Meridian RANGE	£ CALL
Mission RANGE	£ CALL
Monitor Audio RANGE	£ CALL
Quad RANGE	£ CALL
Ruark RANGE	£ CALL
Wharfedale RANGE	£ CALL

HI-FI SYSTEMS

Arcam Solo Ex Speakers	£ CALL
Denon RANGE	£ CALL
Linn Classik Music Ex Spks	£ CALL
Monitor Audio i-Deck	£249.95
Onkyo CR505DAB Ex Spks	£ CALL
Teac RANGE	£ CALL
Yamaha CRX-M170 Ex Spks	£ CALL

DVD SYSTEMS

Denon RANGE	£ CALL
KEF KIT100 Inc Speakers	£ CALL
Teac RANGE	£ CALL

MULTI-ROOM AUDIO

Cyrus Link RANGE	£ CALL
Living Control RANGE	£ CALL
Yamaha MusicCast RANGE	£ CALL

DVD PLAYERS

MAKE & MODEL	REGION 2	MULTI REGION
Arcam RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Cyrus RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon DVD-A1XV	£ CALL	£ CALL
Harman Kardon RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Marantz RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Meridian RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Panasonic RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Pioneer RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Samsung DVD-HD950	£ CALL	£ CALL
Toshiba SD350	£79.95	£89.95
Yamaha RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL

DVD RECORDERS

MAKE & MODEL	REGION 2	MULTI REGION
Panasonic RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Pioneer RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL

A/V AMPLIFIERS & RECEIVERS

Arcam RANGE	£ CALL
Audiolab RANGE	£ CALL
Cyrus RANGE	£ CALL
Denon AVC-A1XV A/V Amplifier	£ CALL
Denon RANGE	£ CALL
Harman Kardon RANGE	£ CALL
Lexicon RANGE	£ CALL
Marantz RANGE	£ CALL
Onkyo RANGE	£ CALL
Pioneer VSX-1014s A/V Receiver	£399.95
Pioneer VSX-2014i A/V Receiver	£499.95
Pioneer VSX-AX5Ai A/V Receiver	£749.95
Pioneer VSA-AX10Ai A/V Amplifier	£1799.95
Pioneer NEW RANGE	£ CALL
Rotel RANGE	£ CALL
Yamaha DSP-AX757SE A/V Amplifier	£399.95
Yamaha RX-V357 A/V Receiver	£149.95
Yamaha RX-V557 A/V Receiver	£299.95

A/V SPEAKERS & PACKAGES

Acoustic Energy Evo 3B	£679.95
Artcoustic RANGE	£ CALL
Audica RANGE	£ CALL
B&W RANGE	£ CALL
B&W Mini Theatre RANGE	£ CALL
KEF KHT1005	£299.95
KEF KHT2005.2	£599.95
KEF Q7 AV	£ CALL
M&K RANGE	£ CALL
Mission M Cube	£ CALL
Mission Elegante RANGE	£ CALL
Monitor Audio RANGE	£ CALL
Mordaunt Short Genie	£649.95
Quad L-Series	£ CALL
Wharfedale Diamond 9 HCP	£ CALL
Yamaha YSP RANGE	£ CALL

SUBWOOFERS

B&W RANGE	£ CALL
M&K RANGE	£ CALL
MJ Acoustics RANGE	£ CALL
Monitor Audio RANGE	£ CALL
Quad L Series	£ CALL
REL RANGE	£ CALL
Wharfedale Diamond SW150	£ CALL

PLASMA

Fujitsu RANGE	£ CALL
Hitachi RANGE	£ CALL
LG RANGE	£ CALL
Loewe RANGE	£ CALL
Panasonic RANGE	£ CALL
Pioneer PDP436XDE 43"	£ CALL
Pioneer PDP506XDE 50"	£ CALL
Samsung RANGE	£ CALL

LCD TV

Hitachi RANGE	£ CALL
LG RANGE	£ CALL
Loewe RANGE	£ CALL
Panasonic RANGE	£ CALL
Philips RANGE	£ CALL
Samsung RANGE	£ CALL
Sharp Aquos RANGE	£ CALL
Toshiba RANGE	£ CALL

PROJECTORS

Optoma RANGE	£ CALL
Screenplay RANGE	£ CALL
ScreenPlay SP5700 (REFURBISHED, LAST FEW)	£1499.95
Sharp RANGE	£ CALL
Sim 2 RANGE	£ CALL
Sim 2 C3X	£ CALL
ThemeScene RANGE	£ CALL

ACCESSORIES

We have a wide range of Accessories from **QED, Soundstyle, Grado, Goldring** and **more...**

Who are Sevenoaks?

Established as Sevenoaks Hi-Fi in 1972, we have grown steadily onto one of the leading independent home entertainment specialists in the UK, earning a reputation for outstanding service, choice and value for money. In 1995, reflecting our commitment to the emergent new technologies in home cinema, our name was changed to Sevenoaks Sound & Vision. We now have 49 stores across the land stocking a broad range of exceptional equipment and accessories.

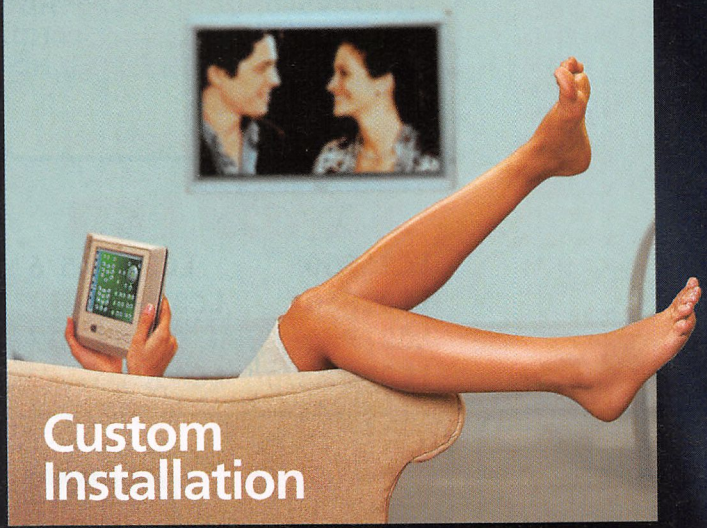
How to shop at Sevenoaks

When it comes to making big decisions about what to buy, there's no substitute for actually road-testing your prospective purchases - seeing, hearing and experiencing the products in action, with the benefit of our expert knowledge and guidance to help you choose. To get the most from your Sevenoaks Sound & Vision experience, simply follow this checklist:

- **ESTABLISH YOUR AIMS** - Are you tweaking an existing system to improve sound or picture quality, or are you looking for a more fundamental and comprehensive upgrade?
- **BRING YOUR FAVOURITE DISCS WITH YOU** - To ensure you get the most from the music and movies in your collection, it pays to test equipment using those very same discs or records, that way you can readily compare levels of performance. However, if you prefer, we can supply a selection of demo discs - current mainstream entertainment that serves to highlight the capabilities of the equipment.
- **JUST ASK** - If you are unsure of any aspect of the products or technologies available, or would like more information about installation options, simply let us know and our staff will be happy to help you out.
- **TAKE YOUR TIME** - We want you to be as happy as possible with your choices, so please take as much time as you need to determine which products are right for you.

WITH OUR CUSTOM DESIGNED INSTALLATIONS, your home entertainment choices become as convenient as they are clever. We can help transform every room and every home, whatever your requirements and budget.

Our installation experts are trained to the highest standards in all areas and provide a prompt, reliable and totally professional service. Rest assured also that our commitment to service doesn't end once your equipment is in place. Sevenoaks staff will continue to support you and your kit long after your initial visit to one of our stores.



Sevenoaks Website

The Sevenoaks Sound & Vision website has news and information on the Sevenoaks group and detailed pages to help you locate your nearest store. In addition, there are hundreds of **SPECIAL OFFERS** and **STOCK CLEARANCE** items available from our stores nationwide - many with savings of up to 50%.
To view our regularly updated product lists, visit **www.ssav.com** and click on **special offers**

Hi-Fi & Home Cinema Guide
2005 EDITION

Pick-up a copy of our **72 Page Guide** at your nearest Sevenoaks Sound & Vision store or order a copy via our Website. The brochure will be posted to you (UK mainland addresses only) **FREE OF CHARGE**.

SEVENOAKS
SOUND & VISION

NATIONWIDE STORE GUIDE

ABERDEEN 01224 252797
- 57 CROWN STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*

BEDFORD 01234 272779
- 29-31 ST PETERS STREET

BRIGHTON 01273 733338
- 57 WESTERN ROAD, HOVE

BRISTOL 0117 974 3727
- 92B WHITELADIES ROAD, CLIFTON

BROMLEY 020 8290 1988
- 39A EAST STREET

CAMBRIDGE 01223 304770
- 17 BURLEIGH STREET

CARDIFF 029 2047 2899
- 104-106 ALBANY ROAD

CHELSEA 020 7352 9466
- 403 KINGS ROAD

CHELTENHAM 01242 241171
- 14 PITTVILLE STREET

CRAWLEY 01293 510777
- 32 THE BOULEVARD

CROYDON 020 8665 1203
- 369-373 LONDON ROAD

EALING 020 8579 8777
- 24 THE GREEN *OPEN SUNDAY*

EDINBURGH 0131 229 7267
- 5 THE GRASSMARKET

EPSOM 01372 720720
- 12 UPPER HIGH STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*

EXETER 01392 218895
- 28 COWICK STREET

GLASGOW 0141 332 9655
- 88 GREAT WESTERN ROAD *OPEN SUNDAY*

GUILDFORD 01483 536666
- 73B NORTH STREET

HOLBORN 020 7837 7540
- 144-148 GRAYS INN ROAD

HULL 01482 587171
- 1 SAVILE ROW, SAVILE STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*

KINGSTON 020 8547 0717
- 43 FIFE ROAD *OPEN SUNDAY*

LEEDS 0113 245 2775
- 62 NORTH STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*

LEICESTER 0116 253 6567
- 10 LOSEBY LANE

LINCOLN 01522 527397
- 20-22 CORPORATION STREET *(OFF HIGH STREET)*

LOUGHTON 020 8532 0770 **NEW**
- 7-9 GOLDINGS HILL *(DUE TO OPEN 19 NOVEMBER)*

MAIDSTONE 01622 686366
- 96 WEEK STREET

MANCHESTER 0161 831 7969
- 69 HIGH ST, CITY CENTRE

NEWCASTLE 0191 221 2320
- 19 NEWGATE STREET

NORWICH 01603 767605
- 29-29A ST GILES STREET

NOTTINGHAM 0115 911 2121
- 597-599 MANSFIELD ROAD, SHERWOOD

OXFORD 01865 241773
- 41 ST CLEMENTS STREET

PETERBOROUGH 01733 897697
- 36-38 PARK ROAD *OPEN SUNDAY*

PLYMOUTH 01752 226011
- 107 CORNWALL STREET

POOLE 01202 671677
- LATIMER HOUSE, 44-46 HIGH STREET

PRESTON 01772 825777
- 40-41 LUNE STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*

READING 0118 959 7768
- 3-4 KINGS WALK SHOPPING CENTRE

SEVENOAKS 01732 459555
- 109-113 LONDON ROAD

SHEFFIELD 0114 255 5861
- 635 QUEENS ROAD, HEELEY *OPEN SUNDAY*

SOLIHULL 0121 733 3727
- 149-151 STRATFORD ROAD

SOUTHAMPTON 023 8033 7770
- 33 LONDON ROAD *OPEN SUNDAY*

SOUTHGATE 020 8886 2777
- 77 CHASE SIDE

STAINES 01784 460777
- 4 THAMES STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*

SWINDON 01793 610992
- 8-9 COMMERCIAL ROAD

SWISS COTTAGE 020 7722 9777
- 21 NORTHWAYS PDE, FINCHLEY RD *OPEN SUNDAY*

TUNBRIDGE WELLS 01892 531543
- 28-30 ST JOHNS ROAD

WATFORD 01923 213533
- 478 ST ALBANS ROAD

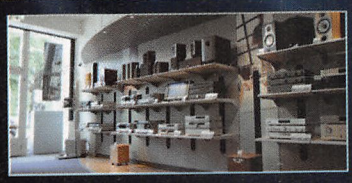
WEYBRIDGE 01932 828525
- 43 CHURCH STREET, THE QUADRANT

WITHAM (ESSEX) 01376 501733
- 1 THE GROVE CENTRE

WOLVERHAMPTON 01902 312225
- 29-30 CLEVELAND STREET

YEOVIL 01935 700078 **NEW**
- 14 SILVER STREET

OPENING HOURS: PLEASE TELEPHONE OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE
E-MAIL: [insert store location]@ssav.com



MUST-BUY PRODUCTS FOR THE SEASON

HD PLASMAs & LCDs @ HI-FI CONFIDENTIAL

020 7233 7225
For The Latest Prices Visit
www.hificonfidential.co.uk

0% INTEREST FREE CREDIT

DVD RECORDERS
PHILIPS DVDR3305 - £129
PANASONIC DMRES10 - £149
PANASONIC DMREH60 - £399
PIONEER DVR930 - £849
PIONEER DVR530 - £349
PIONEER DVR630 - £449
SONY RDRHX510 - £289
SONY RDRHXD710 - £379
SONY RDRHXD910 - £599

HD DVD PLAYERS
DENON DVD1920 - £219
DENON DVD2910 - £499
SONY DVPNS92 - £179
TOSHIBA SD350E - £89
YAMAHA S2500 - £599

DVD SYSTEMS
SONY DAVDZ500F - £329
SONY DAVDZ700FW - £449
DENON S101 - £799
DENON S301 - £1149
YAMAHA DVXS30 - £499

HD PLASMA TV's
HITACHI 42PD7500 - £2049
PANASONIC TH37PV500 - £1749
PANASONIC TH42PV500 - £2049
PHILIPS 42PF7520D - £1549
PHILIPS 42PF9967D - £1999
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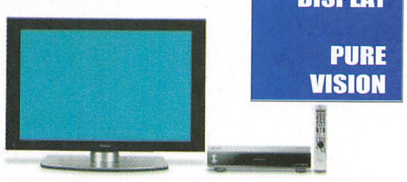

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PHILIP S 37PF 5520D	V.SPECIAL
PHILIP S 37PF 9830	V.SPECIAL
SONY KDLS19A10	V.SPECIAL
SONY KDLS23A12U	V.SPECIAL
SONY KDLS26A12U	V.SPECIAL
SONY KDLS 32A12U	V.SPECIAL
SONY KDLV32A12U	V.SPECIAL
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- We visit Korea to reveal LG's flatpanel secrets
- The tech of tomorrow unveiled at CEATEC Japan
- Win snazzy AV furniture and the latest DVDs
- News, Buyer's Guide, Jargon Busters and more

Issue 303 – on sale 29 December 2005

(contents subject to change)

What Video & Widescreen TV

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO TVs, DVD & DIGITAL RECORDERS

Advice Zone

Having trouble deciphering techno-jargon? Don't know your amps from your elbow? Here's where we explain all

When you first get into home cinema the technology and jargon can be daunting: that's where our foolproof Advice Zone comes in.

Our detailed Jargon Busters handle all the features and sockets found on a variety of AV kit to enable you to set up and optimise your system with total confidence.

We've also got a full explanation of our test data so you know all the ins and outs of the equipment you'll be using and the rigorous procedures that we follow when we test it here at *What Video and Widescreen TV.*

LCD & plasma TV Jargon Buster 104
Everything you need to know about panel spec and connections

Projector Jargon Buster 106
Know your DLPs from your LCDs and CRTs and find which will suit you best

Digital recorder Jargon Buster 108
Formats, inputs, hard disks and the rest, all laid bare

DVD player Jargon Buster 110
Can that deck you are eyeing up output progressive scan? Find out here

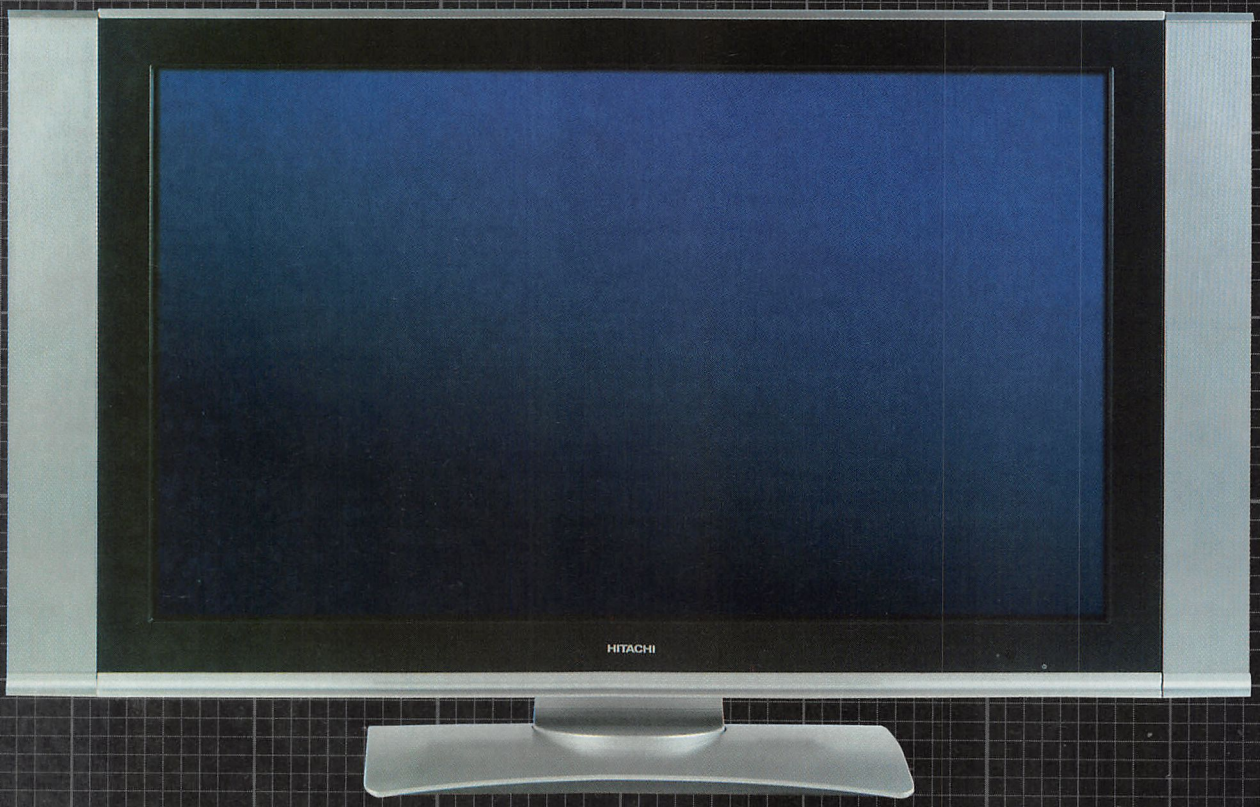
Freeview receiver Jargon Buster 112
Digital terrestrial TV decoders made easy

Receiver Jargon Buster 114
The hub of your AV system broken down into the bits that matter

Test Data Explained 116
What the results of our objective tests mean in real-world terms

Tech Labs Q&A 118
Find out what goes on in our laboratories and how it's designed to help you

PLASMA & LCD TVs



The basics

Aspect ratio

The shape of the screen, expressed as the ratio of the horizontal side to the vertical side. For instance, a widescreen TV is much longer horizontally than it is vertically, so its aspect ratio is 16:9. Non-widescreen TVs have a ratio of 4:3, which more closely resembles a square shape.

The shape of the screen determines how different types of source material are displayed. Movies on DVD are invariably encoded in widescreen aspect ratios (commonly 2.35:1 or 1.85:1) which are almost perfect for viewing on a 16:9 TV – though 2.35:1 DVDs will have black bars above and below the picture. Most digital TV channels also broadcast in widescreen. However, when viewed on a 4:3 screen, widescreen broadcasts must be adapted. TVs often do this by either filling the screen with the central part of the action or putting black bars above and below the picture (known as the letterbox format).

Contrast ratio

Many companies use contrast ratio as a selling point for their TVs and it plays an important role in how good pictures are. It can help you determine how richly coloured onscreen images will be. Simply put, it is the measure of a projector's blackest black compared to its whitest white. A higher contrast ratio is better because it gives a wider range between these two extremes.

Resolution

This determines the amount of picture detail that can be seen on the TV's screen. It is expressed as the number of active horizontal and vertical pixels (or picture elements) available. A TV with a resolution of 1,366 x 768 has 1,366 pixels along the horizontal plane and 768 on the vertical. Multiplying the two gives you the total number of available pixels. All the different resolutions are shown in the table below.

The number of vertical pixels corresponds to the number of active picture scanning lines – 480 lines for NTSC (US/Japan) and 576 for PAL (Western Europe) – though the deinterlacing circuits inside LCD or plasma TVs mean that these picture lines aren't visible.

Brightness

The brightness of an LCD or plasma screen is measured in candelas per square metre (cd/m2). This figure is often quoted in LCD TV specifications. The figure shows how much light is emitted by the screen. A higher reading means a brighter picture, which is better for the viewer.

Screen size

This is measured diagonally and usually expressed in inches. The smallest plasma screen size is 32in and some companies have made screens in excess of 100in. LCD TVs start from around 14in and are available in sizes up to 45in. A few manufacturers have achieved screen sizes of over 50in, (the largest is currently 55in).

Viewing angle

LCD displays were primarily designed as computer monitors, intended for 'straight-on' viewing. But brightness and contrast levels would drop dramatically when viewing the screen from a wide angle. Now that LCD displays are being used as TVs in areas where straight-on viewing may not be possible, viewing angles have widened. Current LCD sets have viewing angles as high as 176° horizontally and vertically.

Guide to resolution

NAME	STANDS FOR	NUMBER OF HORIZONTAL x VERTICAL PIXELS	ASPECT RATIO
VGA	Video Graphics Array	640 x 480	4:3
WVGA	Widescreen Video Graphics Array	852 x 480 or 858 x 484, depending on panel	16:9
SVGA	Super Video Graphics Array	800 x 600	4:3
XGA	eXtended Graphics Array	1,024 x 768	4:3
WXGA	eXtended Graphics Array	1,280 x 768 or 1,366 x 768, depending on panel	16:9
UXGA	Ultra eXtended Graphics Array	1,600 x 1,200	4:3
WUXGA	Widescreen Ultra eXtended Graphics Array	1,920 x 1,200	16:10

Connections

RF input

1 This allows you to connect your aerial and send the analogue broadcast signal to the tuner.

Scart input

2 This is the standard all-purpose AV input that enables you to hook up DVD players, digital TV receivers, VCRs and so on. The Scart inputs on most LCD TVs are capable of accepting RGB video, the slightly inferior S-video and composite video. The Widescreen Signalling (WSS) trigger is carried on one of the Scart's pins. If a set is compatible with this, it will automatically switch to the correct aspect ratio of the source when it detects it on the Scart.

Component video input

3 A high quality video input provided by three phono (or sometimes BNC) sockets. One of these is the luminance signal Y (usually coloured green), and the other two carry the red and blue chrominance (colour) signals – Pb (coloured blue) and Pr (coloured red). This separation results in cleaner pictures than other connections. Component inputs are used to pipe progressive scan signals, which LCD TVs are capable of displaying (see deinterlacing below).

Composite video input/output

4 The lowest quality video connection, which usually takes the form of a yellow phono socket. It's best avoided, unless no other connections are available.

HDMI

5 This all-digital socket is capable of carrying both high-definition pictures and sound. Although currently only found on a handful of DVD players, its importance will increase dramatically once HDTV becomes established in the UK, as it also carries HDCP copy protection.

DVI

6 This pictures-only input uses the same video protocol as HDMI and will become similarly indispensable once HDTV takes off in a big way. Like its audio-carrying cousin, this socket's chief advantages are its huge bandwidth and all-digital nature and most (but not currently all) DVI jacks are HDCP compliant.

PC input

7 LCD technology is superb for displaying PC images because it's capable of displaying high resolutions. This 15-pin VGA port enables you to feed signals from a PC to the TV. Some also sport a PC audio minijack input.

Stereo audio inputs/outputs

8 A pair of red and white phonos capable of accepting stereo audio from AV equipment, such as a DVD player, which can then be played through the TV's speakers. Some LCD sets are able to channel sound from their stereo audio outputs, allowing you to pipe it to an external amplifier. This is particularly useful if you want to listen to TV broadcasts in surround sound using Dolby Pro Logic or Pro Logic II.

Other Connections

S-video input

A medium-quality video input. The 4-pin version doesn't carry sound. S-video can also be carried through Scart with audio.

Sound

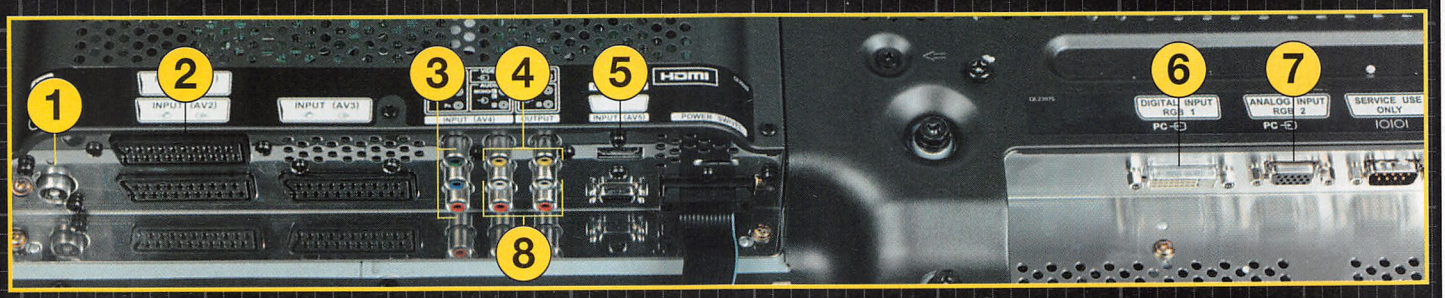
Most LCD TVs have built-in speakers, but it's not unusual for larger sets to sport detachable speakers. The built-in amplification of most small LCD sets isn't very powerful. Many LCD TVs come with a virtual surround option, such as Virtual Dolby, which attempts to create a surround effect from two speakers.

Ready for hi-def?

When you see a plasma or LCD TV that sports the HD Ready badge (below), that means it guarantees...

- A minimum native screen resolution of 720 lines in wide aspect ratio
- That the display that will accept HD signals via component video (YPbPr) and DVI or HDMI
- HD-capable inputs that will accept the following video formats: a) 1,280x720p and b) 1,920x1,080i (at 50 and 60Hz)
- A DVI or HDMI input with HDCP copy protection support

HD ready



Common Features

PICTURE ADJUSTMENTS

In order to achieve the optimum picture quality, all LCD TVs allow you to adjust the individual aspects of a picture. These include brightness, contrast, colour and sharpness. Some pricier sets may offer even greater flexibility, like the ability to adjust individual colours such as red, blue, green, cyan and magenta.

PICTURE PRESETS

Manufacturers often include various pre-programmed modes with different colour, contrast and brightness levels. They're designed to suit different types of material, such as sport, movies or PC games. Some TVs also feature colour temperature settings, which alter reds to affect the overall 'warmth' of the picture.

NOISE REDUCTION

One of the greatest bugbears of LCD technology is the amount of noise visible in the picture. Some sets naturally tame it better than others. However, some TVs include noise reduction, which softens the picture slightly to smooth out the appearance of noise. Sadly, this often compromises detail reproduction and sometimes has a detrimental effect when used with other picture technologies.

DEINTERLACING

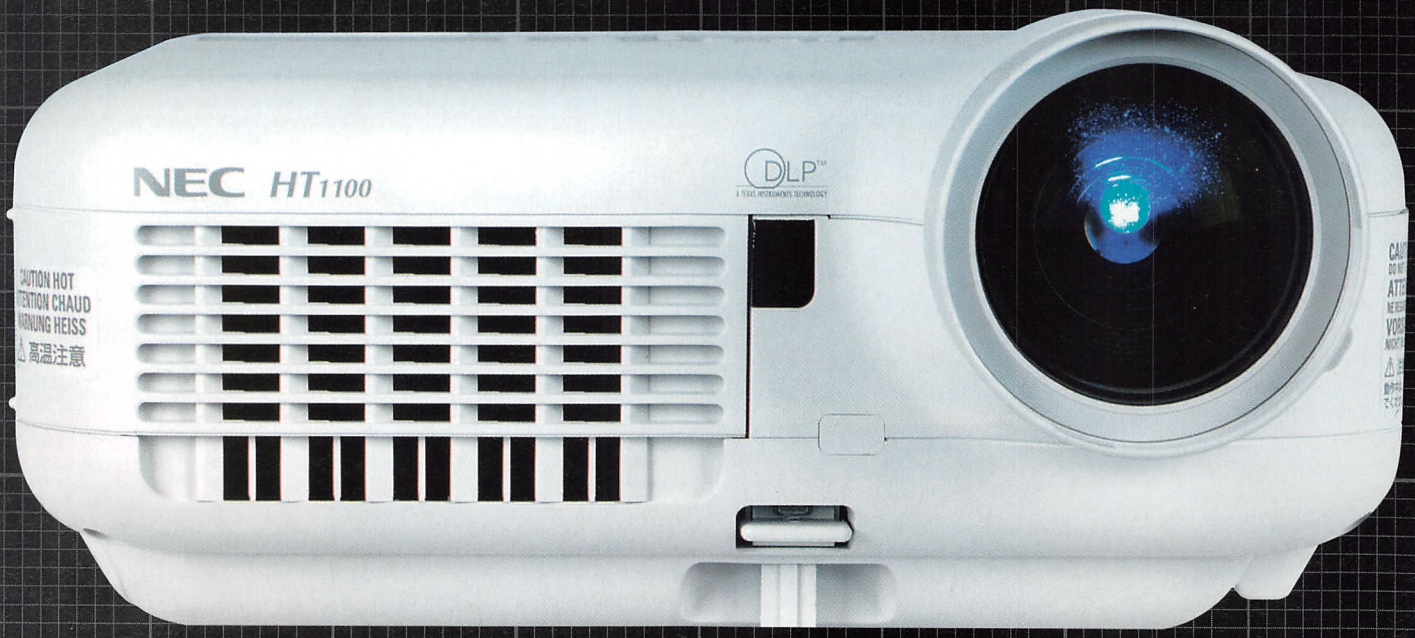
Standard CRT TVs display video by showing one 'field' after the other. A field contains half the scanning lines of a frame, made up of alternate lines. This process is known as interlacing. LCD (and plasma) sets combine the fields to display whole, full-resolution frames. If the source video (such as a DVD) is in interlaced form, an LCD set uses special circuitry to turn the split fields into frames. This process is called deinterlacing. Advantages include the elimination of jagged edges and jerky movement, which result from the use of two interlaced fields.

NTSC/PAL

In order to display NTSC (US or Japanese) video on a PAL TV, you have to make sure the TV is able to display it. If the TV doesn't support NTSC playback, the signal will have to be converted to PAL beforehand.

Most DVD players will do a straight conversion to 50Hz PAL or convert it to 60Hz PAL, a compromise mode that some non-NTSC compatible TVs can display.

PROJECTORS



If you really want a massive screen for sport or movies in your living-room, you could opt for a projector, which means immersing yourself in a whole new world of technical mumbo-jumbo. Read our handy guide to find out what's what with these magic lanterns

Projection Technology

There are essentially three core projection technologies you need to consider, with a fourth possibly set to make a stir in the next year or two. Each has its advantages and disadvantages, which we'll briefly cover here.

Digital Light Projection

Developed by Texas Instruments, DLP projectors are built round a microchip with many thousands of vibrating mirrors positioned on it. The angle of each mirror can be adjusted individually as the picture requires, with colour provided by a fast-spinning (usually four or six-speed) colour wheel, through which the projector's lamp shines.

For DLP: superior contrast; doesn't suffer from screenburn (see Common features and terms); DLP projectors tend to be smaller and more portable than some rival technologies; can be cheap; can generally be set up from scratch within five minutes.

Against DLP: can suffer from 'the rainbow effect' (see Common features and terms); can suffer with dotty noise during camera pans; uses noisy fans to keep cool; can suffer 'dead' pixels if a mirror fails.

LCD

LCD projectors use a sophisticated, tiny optical system that divides intense lamplight into red, green and blue beams for delivery through three separate LCD panels. These analyse the picture signal to decide the tone of light that should be allowed to go through on a pixel-by-pixel basis. Then the three beams are reconverged into one for firing at your screen.

For LCD: generally easy to set up; usually free of picture processing noise; sometimes very affordable (under £1,000); immune to screenburn; usually small and portable

Against LCD: doesn't naturally have great contrast; can suffer the 'chicken-wire effect' (see Common features and terms); sometimes has an unnatural colour tone; needs noisy fans to keep cool; can suffer dead pixels.

CRT projectors

CRT projectors contain three high-brightness monochrome tubes based on the same electron-firing principles as a normal CRT TV. Each tube handles a different colour component – red, green and blue – with adjustable convergence filters used to line up the three colour components and deliver the finished picture.

For CRT: usually has great contrast; picture free of digital processing artefacts; video-friendly colour tone; can run silently in some cases; can deliver a more nuanced picture.

Against CRT: requires a permanent, fixed installation; it's bulky; doesn't generally deliver very bright pictures; can be complicated; is susceptible to screenburn; tends to be relatively expensive.

LCOS/D-ILA

D-ILA and LCoS work on similar principles, based around tiny LCD arrays stuck between a layer of polarised glass and a layer of reflective silicon. Light is passed through the LCD layer before rebounding off aluminium electrodes positioned behind each LCD pixel. By rapidly switching these electrodes on and off, the light-passing properties of each pixel can be adjusted as the light passes back through the array to deliver different greyscales.

For LCoS: usually delivers immensely detailed, smooth pictures; doesn't suffer from the 'chicken-wire effect', screenburn or rainbowing; tends to be bright; can deliver very natural, colour tones.

Against LCoS: it's expensive; doesn't currently offer great contrast range; hard to find.

Common Features and Terms

THE CHICKEN-WIRE EFFECT
A phenomenon with LCD projectors whereby it's possible to distinguish the grid-like physical structure of the panel in the projected picture, visible as a sort of wire mesh effect.

THE RAINBOW EFFECT
Describes the way the colour wheel system used as part of DLP projectors can produce almost subliminal flickering bands of primary colours on pictures.

FAROUDJA DCDI
A French-developed digital picture process used by some projectors to reduce the blank lines in pictures and make curved edges look less jagged.

SCREEN BURN
Process whereby phosphor-based technologies, such as CRT projectors, can be left with a permanent 'echo' of a strong, continuous picture component (such as a TV channel logo).

HIGH DEFINITION
A stunning high-resolution picture standard that's big in the US and will hopefully get here one day. So it makes sense to get a projector that is compatible with high definition.

KEYSTONE CORRECTION
A digital process used to straighten the edges of a picture to compensate for angling caused by not having the projector directly opposite the centre of the screen.

THROW DISTANCE RATIO
The size of image a projector can deliver at a specified distance from the screen. It's important to pick the projector that makes best use of your available space.

PROGRESSIVE SCAN
A picture processing system which shows all the lines of a picture in one go rather than in the normal two separate sweeps. This improves detail and sharpness.

NATIVE 16:9
Some DLP, LCD and LCoS projectors use 16:9 'widescreen' pixel panels, which can deliver a much sharper, more detailed widescreen picture than projectors which only give you widescreen by using a small portion of 4:3-ratio chipsets.

Connections

Composite video input
1 Is delivered via Scart or, more commonly, a single phono cable. Composite picture quality is much noisier than the other systems, and should be avoided where possible.

S-video input
2 Can be delivered via Scart or a special 4-pin lead – though only the latter option is usually available on a projector. S-video delivers decent pictures – though not as good as RGB, HDMI or component.

Component video input
3 Delivers pictures through three separate cables (for the red, green and blue parts of the picture signal), keeping interference to a minimum. Component video leads can also deliver ultra High Definition and progressive scan pictures from suitable sources.

12V trigger output
4 Can be used to, say, trigger a projector screen to drop down automatically when the projector is turned on.

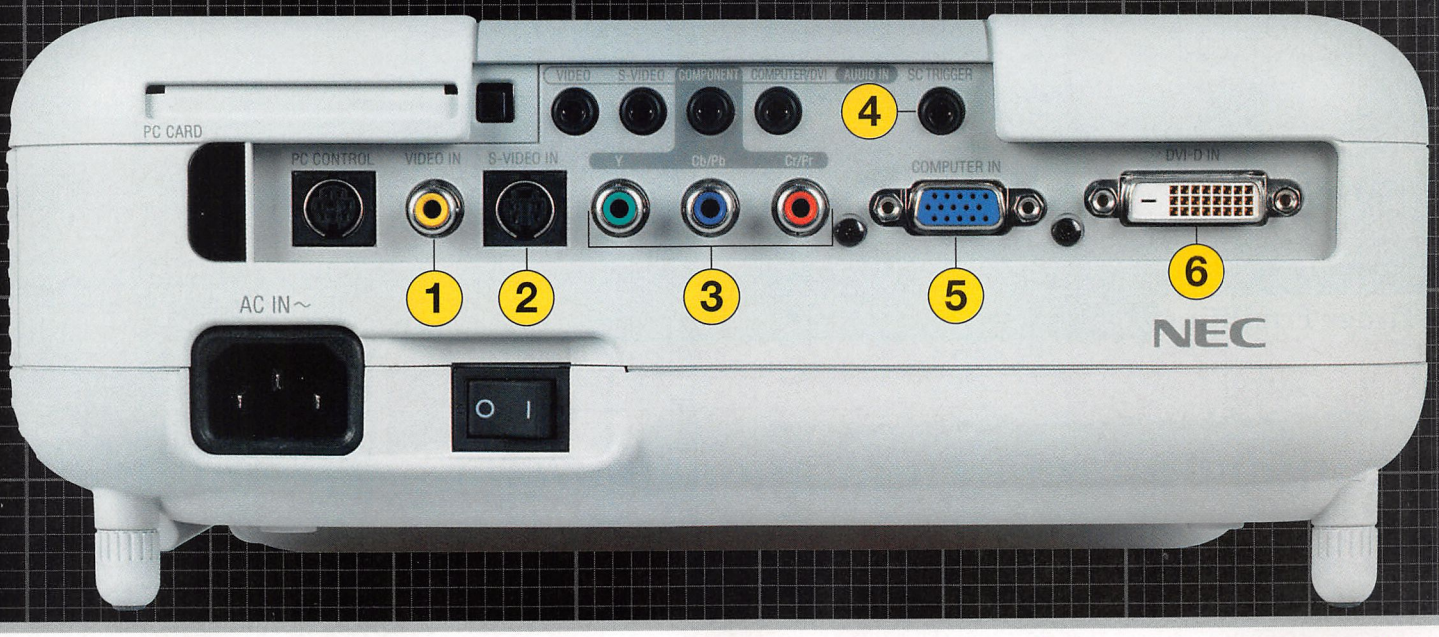
15-pin D-Sub VGA input
5 Found on most projectors for attaching a PC. A projector with this connection can double up as a display for business presentations or for playing video games. This is another good way of feeding high-definition material into the projector.

DVI/HDMI input
6 Enables pictures to be transmitted from a HDMI/DVI-equipped source to a projector totally in the digital domain, thus removing the need for picture-spoiling digital to analogue conversions.

Other Connections
Scart sockets are relatively rare on projectors but useful, since they make it easier to connect existing equipment. Plus, if you make use of Scart's RGB option (it can also deliver composite and S-video), it can deliver pictures nearly as good as component video. Some projectors also sport audio inputs, allowing you to monitor sound from your source through an built-in speaker.

HD Ready

VIVA LA RESOLUTION!
A lot has been written about high-definition broadcasting and how it can be viewed on suitably equipped plasma and LCD TVs. But projectors can also display hi-def. If your projector boasts a minimum resolution of 720 lines, an HDCP-compliant HDMI or DVI input and component video input, then it's worthy of the 'HD Ready' badge, the industry seal of approval that guarantees HD compatibility. However, if a projector doesn't boast sport this badge, there's a good chance that it can still display hi-def, as Sky has said that it will deliver its high-definition programmes via component output, as well as HDMI or DVI.



DIGITAL RECORDERS

Recording and Playback Features

DVD-MULTI
Is the new official industry badge to identify recorders that support both DVD-RW and DVD-RAM (with DVD-R). Some other hybrids exist, like Sony's DVD+RW and -RW decks and the Toshiba D-R1, which excludes DVD-RW VR mode recording.

TIMESLIP
Also called Chasing Playback (or words to that effect), enables you to play a recording from an earlier point while it's still being recorded. Common to HDD recorders and DVD-RAM, it's also possible in other formats, such as Pioneer's latest range of DVD-RW recorders.

CONSTANT BITRATE RECORDING
(or fixed rate recording)

This maintains a constant dataflow from the video encoder to the disc, which is set by the user to tailor exact running times. For best results at lower bitrates, however, variable bitrate recording is recommended.

BUFFER MEMORY (HDD)
Stores everything you watch, then lets you go back and store it permanently.

VARIABLE BITRATE RECORDING (VBR)
This allows the recorder to automatically vary the amount of data that's being written to disc at any given moment (within parameters set by the user) to get the best available picture quality for the programme. Therefore slow scenes use less space, enabling fast moving ones to occupy more space.

FLEXIBLE/MANUAL RECORDING MODES
Make the recorder adjust bitrates (whether fixed or VBR) to allot a given running time to a DVD. This feature is mainly found on Panasonic and Pioneer recorders.

DIGITAL NOISE REDUCTION
Improves the image quality of recording and playback through digital processing to minimise analogue grain, digital blocking and so on.

LINEAR PCM AUDIO
Is mainly used in conjunction with the highest bitrate for picture quality and is often used to make superior copies of digital camcorder sound. The audio is less compressed than Dolby Digital – a stereo version of which is used by DVD recorders.

TIME BASE CORRECTOR
Stabilises VHS recordings for DVD transfer. Expensive as standalone items, some recorders have them built-in.

DISC LIBRARY
Some recorders keep a record of the contents of each disc that you've recorded, so you can easily find which one a particular programme is on, or how much free space remains.

CPRM
(Content Protection for Recorded Media)

Is a new copy protection system that, for example, will prevent some digital TV broadcasts being duplicated (or even recorded at all, in the case of pay-per-view).

HIGH-SPEED DUBBING
(Copying)

Can be performed between digital sources using appropriate links, such as from hard-disk to DVD in combi recorders. Make sure the disc you use can handle it.

Timer Facilities

VIDEOPLUS
Is the established numerically-based timer setting technique found in most VCRs and now DVD recorders.

GUIDEPLUS
Is VideoPlus' replacement, which uses a user-friendly onscreen programme listings display for browsing and timer setting.

NAVICLICK
Is Thomson's onscreen listings guide using teletext programme data for timer setting.

SET-TOP BOX CONTROL
Means that a recorder will change a digital TV receiver's channels automatically using a transmitter device – convenient for timer recordings.

EXTERNAL TIMER LINK
This is an alternative way of making timer recordings from a digital TV set-top box. Any digibox with its own timer (eg Sky's Programme Planner) can trigger a suitable external recorder to start recording if connected using Scart and then put into 'slave' mode.

Editing

MENU PICTURES
Also known as thumbnails or index frames, these are still images taken from a recording (usually at the beginning) to represent the programme in the disc's menus. Most formats and recorders enable you to do this, or you can usually manually choose any moment from the recording.

INSERT/DELETE CHAPTER MARK
Functions will add or remove chapter marks during manual editing. Most formats and recorders can automatically add chapters at preset intervals.

HIDE CHAPTERS
Is a DVD+RW feature that allows you to conceal a chapter from playback without deletion. If you choose 'Make Edits Compatible' in the disc menu, it stores these changes for playback in other machines.

PLAYLISTS
Are a 'safe' editing feature common to HDD, DVD-RAM and some DVD-RW recorders. They allow you to choose parts of a recording to play and in which order – without affecting the original disc contents.

FINALISATION
As in CD burning, with DVD+R, DVD-R and DVD-RW you must finalise discs before they can be played elsewhere. This makes the contents permanent, though DVD-RWs can usually be unfinalised to make changes, or erased entirely. It can be a lengthy process!

DVD Formats

REWRITABLE DVD FORMATS

DVD+RW the widely available system invented by Philips. Discs can be reused 1,000 times and are compatible in nearly all players. Basic editing is possible but non-linear edits (such as reorganising the order of programmes or scenes) are not.

DVD-RW (VR mode) uses DVD-RW discs as supported by Pioneer, Sharp, LG and multiformat recorders from Sony, JVC and Toshiba. When formatted in VR (Video Recording) mode, you can make non-linear edits, but recordings aren't widely compatible. Disc life is also around 1,000 rewrites.

DVD-RW (Video mode) uses DVD-RW blanks which when formatted by a recorder in Video mode will play in most players. You lose the advanced editing of VR mode and cannot alter the format.

DVD-RAM supported by Panasonic, Toshiba, JVC and Samsung, discs usually come in protective cartridges and allow non-linear editing. They can be reused up to 100,000 times but recordings are compatible with few players.

WRITE-ONCE DVD FORMATS

DVD+R the use-once blank disc for most DVD+RW recorders. You can accumulate recordings on a disc until you are finished, and you can delete individual recordings but you cannot re-record. Discs must be finalised ('sealing' the contents) before playing elsewhere, but once done, compatibility is very high.

DVD-R the widely used write-once format found in DVD-RW and DVD-RAM recorders and many PCs. As with DVD+R, you can compile recordings gradually or remove them from playback without being able to claim back the space or reuse the disc. Discs must also be finalised, after which compatibility in other players is generally good.

Connections

Ethernet

1 This enables you to connect to a home network based around a PC, which allows you to access files remotely from a PC or a second machine in another room.

5.1 Channel output

2 This set of analogue phono-type connectors carries multichannel audio to a receiver and is usually used for DVD-A or SACD playback.

Digital audio output

3 This pipes digital surround sound to your amp and can either be a fibre-optic connection as shown or an electrical, phono-type jack.

Stereo audio line in and out

4 Usually a pair of phono sockets, red and white, for basic stereo or Dolby Pro-Logic connection to or from other equipment.

Composite video

5 Is the rock-bottom input or output, often provided as a yellow phono and best avoided for good quality connections, although it is suitable for normal VHS copying.

S-video

6 Is a medium-quality video connection, sometimes found in a separate socket (particularly DVD recorders) and/or through Scarts.

Scart input

7 Is the standard all-purpose A/V input on almost all European DVD players and recorders. Most should be capable of accepting RGB video for better than S-video quality, but RGB input is not always found with recorders (especially some Japanese brands).

Component video

8 The best analogue video output, this is the conduit for progressive scan pictures and is a popular connection for plasmas and LCD screens.

RF aerial in and out

9 Enables the recorder to tune into and record analogue terrestrial TV channels (as with VCRs) and in some cases access programme listings information. The output passes aerial signals to other equipment, such as a VCR or TV. To date, only one DVD recorder has a built-in Freeview digital terrestrial tuner.

Scart output

10 Don't forget that all DVD recorders can also play standard DVDs. Hook your recorder up to your TV using the Scart and you can enjoy high-quality RGB or S-video pictures.

Other Connections

USB (Universal Serial Bus)

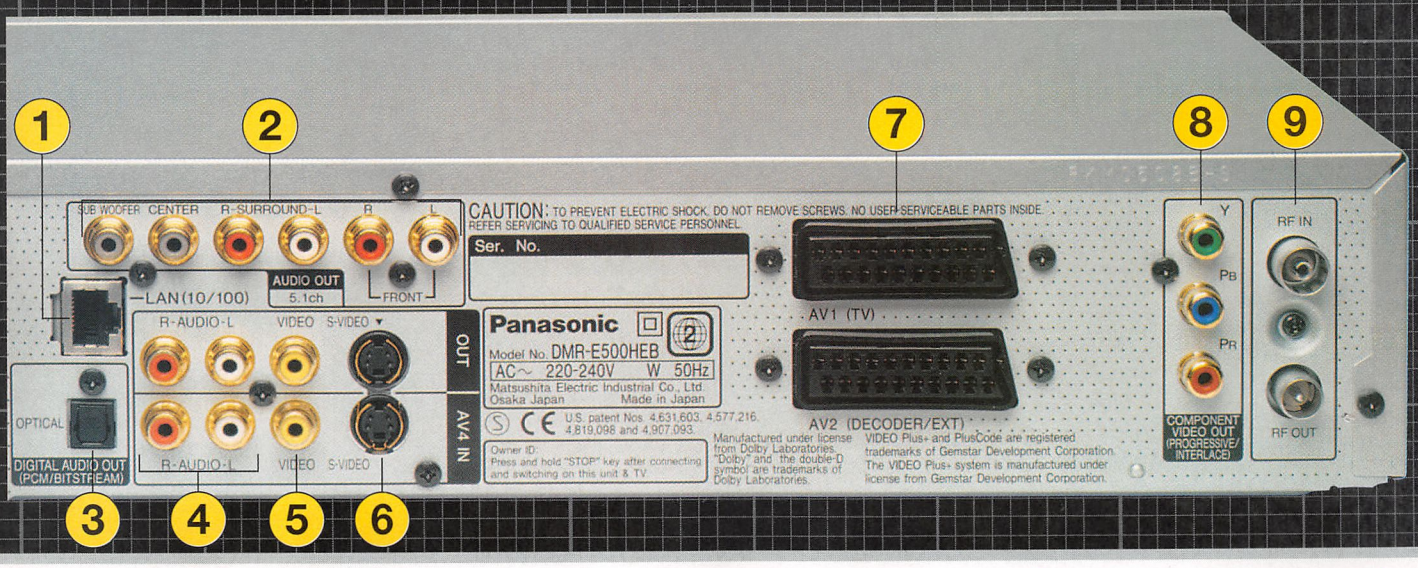
A common PC connection that is included on DVD recorders to transfer multimedia files such as MP3 audio or digital photos directly from PCs or USB memory keyrings.

MULTIMEDIA CARD SLOTS

These are more commonly used by DVD recorders than USB ports for copying digital camera photos and other multimedia files because they can be slotted in directly from the device itself, or via card adaptors.

HDMI (High Definition Multimedia Interface)

Dubbed the 'digital Scart', this sophisticated socket enables full quality digital audio, video and data to be shared between equipment. HDMI ports are gradually appearing on DVD players and plasmas, while the next step will be recorders that accept HDMI input.



DVD PLAYERS

Disc players come bristling with an array of connections and each model has a long list of disc and surround formats with which it is compatible. Use this comprehensive breakdown to find the deck that best suits your video and audio needs

Recording and Playback Features

Standard compatibility

By their nature, all DVD players play DVD-Video and CD. The vast majority also play Video CD and home-recorded CD (CD-RW and/or CD-R), and some play S-video CD (SVCD), frequently used in the Far East. All players will output a Dolby Digital bitstream and all but the most primitive will handle the rival DTS.

Standard playback

DACs (digital-to-audio convertors)

These form the heart of a DVD player. The higher the spec, the better the A/V reproduction is likely to be, though this is no guarantee of superior quality on its own. With the audio DAC, look for at least 96kHz/24bit (though 192kHz/24bit is better) and with the video DAC, 54MHz/12bit is above average, but 108MHz/12bit is not uncommon at the higher end.

VIRTUAL SURROUND

The player, along with any stereo system you listen through, will use surround channel data and sonic tricks to create a semblance of surround sound without rear speakers. Not as good as the real thing and vocals can get swamped on busy soundtracks.

DISC NAVIGATION

Standard DVD features supplied on most players include programmable play to reorder the tracks/chapters of DVDs and (more likely) CDs and a PIN-protected child lock option. More advanced options include intro scan (to view the start of each chapter automatically), bookmarking (to memorise favourite parts), zoom (to enlarge the image) and a screen saver (to save a plasma TV from screen burn if the disc is paused or you're in a menu screen for too long).

Recordable DVD playback

Many DVD players cannot handle home-recorded DVDs because stand-alone players were invented before DVD recording was possible. Newer players have been made with recording support in mind and a handful will play almost every permutation. DVD-RAM playback features in many Panasonic models, while new Pioneer and Sharp players can replay rewritable DVD-RW discs formatted in the more flexible VR mode. DVD-R, DVD+R and DVD+RW discs are broadly compatible, with minor exceptions. Players with the new 'DVD Multi' logo will play DVD-RAM and DVD-RW (VR mode) recordings.

Advanced Playback Features

MULTIREGIONAL

By default, DVD players are locked to a specific regional code. Some have a looser lock than others in that a simple handset key-press sequence will provide multiregion playback. Other machines can be supplied by independent dealers already modified, or players can be refitted by third-party companies. Not relevant if you're content with UK/Europe Region 2 and region-free discs.

NTSC-PAL CONVERSION

If you play an NTSC (US or Japanese) disc on a PAL TV without NTSC compatibility, you need the player to convert to PAL. This can be either full PAL at 50Hz or a compromise mode, PAL 60Hz, which some non-NTSC-compliant TVs will display.

PROGRESSIVE SCAN

The display mode of choice for high-end video users, a progressive display receives a non-interlaced video frame – ie each frame is a full-quality image, not a 'field' or half-resolution frame made up of alternate lines. The result is a sharper, more natural and cleaner-edged picture.

Although it involves no small amount of trickery for the DVD player to recreate a full frame , this is more about restoration than artificial video processing. A few CRT TVs and most plasmas, LCD TVs and projectors are progressive scan compatible. Increasing numbers of DVD players will output progressive scan with both NTSC and PAL material, with PAL having 17 per cent more lines.

AUDIO/VISUAL PROCESSING

More advanced players have at least some preset and/or manual tweaks to audio and picture, so you can tailor the look and sound. Pedigree players may have sophisticated adjustments for hue, sharpness, noise reduction, audio equalisation (including dialogue enhancement) and so on.

SACD and DVD-Audio

While the CD layer of SACD will play in any CD/DVD player and DVD-Audio discs usually have a Dolby Digital alternative that will play in normal DVD players, only dedicated players will access the full high res audio of either format. Some brands – notably Pioneer, Denon and Marantz – make universal players supporting both formats. Worth considering, if you're into high quality music as well as movies.

Multimedia Formats

MP3
Many players provide MP3 audio playback from CD. Newer formats such as AAC (MPEG4 Advanced Audio Coding, by Dolby) and WMA (Windows Media Audio, by Microsoft), as well as variable bitrate (VBR) MP3, are also appearing on players.

MPEG4
The video compression system used by DiVX, a more compressed moving image system than standard DVD's MPEG2. It enables better video streaming over the internet or recording of video onto items such as SD cards. Some players now offer direct playback of multimedia files (including JPEG photos) from card slots. With an adaptor, you can plug various card types into a media slot. An increasing number of DVD decks can play MPEG4 files. MPEG4 is also used by portable video players, which boast a hard disk and allow you to view your files on the move.

Connections

Electrical digital output
1 An electrical connection, using a wired cable, for sending digital audio to an amp. If a player has both kinds, then at least you have some choice.

Optical output
2 A common way to connect your player to any amplification system (including some TVs) for reproducing digital surround sound, such as Dolby Digital and DTS. Uses a fibre optic cable, therefore immune to electrical interference.

5.1 Audio line out
3 Found on any player with built-in surround sound decoding. This enables connection directly to an amp's external inputs using six phono cables. It is used mostly to carry the full bandwidth of SACD and DVD-Audio formats, because optical/coaxial cables cannot do this.

Stereo line out
4 Usually a pair of phono sockets, red and white, for basic stereo or Dolby Pro-Logic connection to hi-fi systems or TVs.

Component video
5 A high quality video output system normally provided by three phono (sometimes BNC) sockets. Quality is comparable with RGB using Scart but component is essential for progressive scan (see below). It is also more robust and less prone to interference than Scart.

Composite video
6 The rock-bottom output, often provided as a yellow phono and best avoided, unless, for some reason, you can't get a picture from the other sockets and you need to reconfigure through the menu.

S-video
7 A medium-quality video connection found in a separate 4-pin socket or through Scart.

Scart
8 The standard all-purpose A/V output on virtually all European DVD players. Most should be capable of outputting RGB video for a quality above S-video.

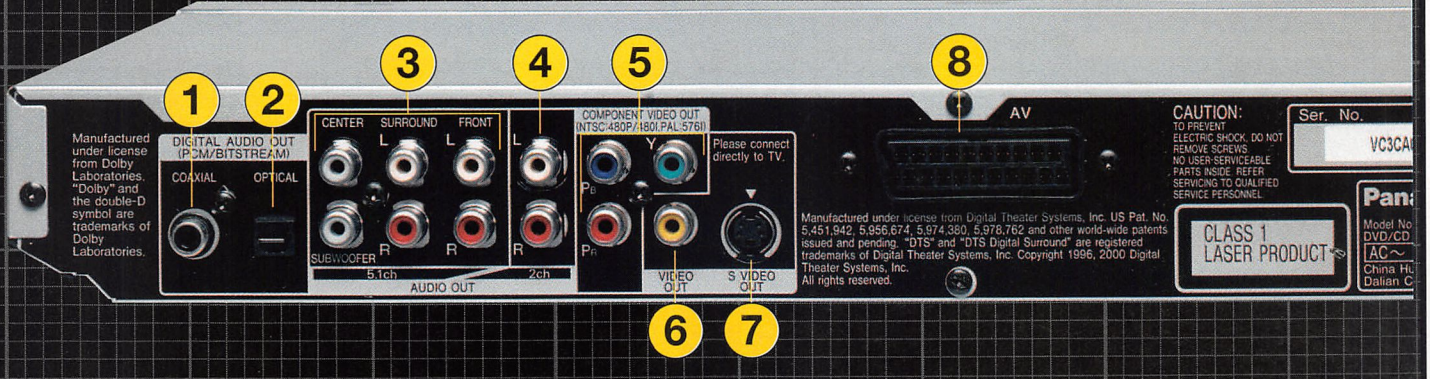
Other Connections

ETHERNET
As used in PC and home networking, you can plug some DVD players (and amps) into PCs or broadband routers to play MP3 or internet radio. An alternative to burning MP3s to CD for living-room playback.

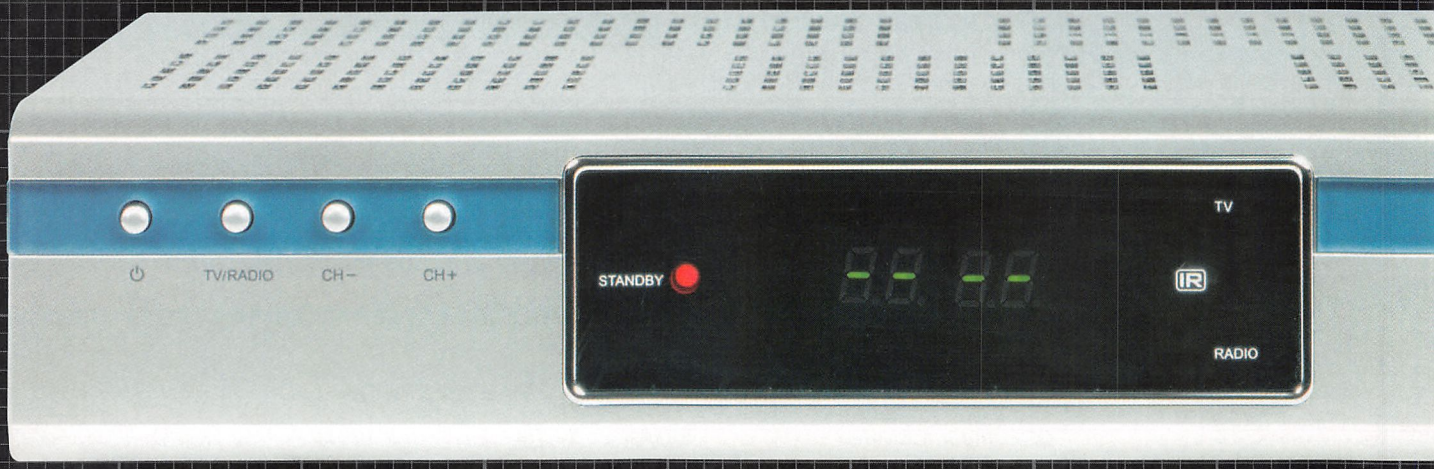
DVI (digital visual interface)
A high-end PC video connection now appearing on some DVD players, enabling a direct digital link from player to screen. Some flat-panel TVs, monitors and projectors are compatible with DVI.

i.LINK (aka Firewire)
Another common PC connection now being adopted in high-end gear as a superior digital audio link between compatible players and amps. It also improves 'handshaking' between products, so that amps select the best mode automatically.

HDMI (High Definition Multimedia Interface)
Dubbed the 'digital Scart', this next-generation socket will enable digital audio, video and data to be shared between players, recorders and displays. Due to appear in a number of products and set to be the 'next big thing' in consumer electronics.



FREEVIEW RECEIVERS



These relatively simple adaptors bring you free digital TV services and are widely and cheaply available. Some are more complex than others, though, so don't buy one until you've read our indispensable guide

Features

Electronic Programme Guide (EPG)

If you don't have a copy of the *Radio Times* to hand, EPGs are a great way of finding out what's on TV. At the touch of a button you can call up a screen that tells you what's being shown on each channel and what's coming up next. It also gives you a description of each programme. The EPG has now expanded from Now and Next to a full seven-day guide which is currently available across the country.

Programme banners

If you don't fancy trawling through the EPG, you can check what you're watching using handy information boxes, which are superimposed over the picture.

Digital text/interactive services

Digital text allows you to access TV listings, sports results, news and much more, just like analogue teletext but with more advanced graphics. Not all Freeview channels have digital text and not all Freeview adaptors are able to receive it.

Interactive services give the viewer a little more control over how they watch TV programmes. For example, the BBC (which is a big supporter of interactive content) often broadcasts sports events and allows you to watch different camera angles, different matches and access statistics about the event. Most interactive content is accessed by 'pressing the red button', a phrase that's cropping up on more and more TV programmes.

Favourite lists

To save you wading through channels you don't watch very often, you can group your favourite ones together in a separate list. That way, each member of the family can have their own list.

RF modulator

An RF modulator allows the digital TV signal to be carried by the RF output and piped to a TV's RF aerial input. This allows you to watch digital channels on a set that has no Scart inputs.

Timer

A small number of Freeview adaptors can be programmed to turn to a certain channel at a given time and tell a compatible VCR (connected to the Scart output) to start recording. They do this by sending one of the Scart pins 'high', which triggers the VCR into life.

16:9/4:3 displays

Enter a Freeview adaptor's set-up menu and you'll find an option to output in 16:9 or 4:3. For widescreen TVs, it should be set to 16:9 – that way widescreen broadcasts will maintain their correct shape. For 'squarescreen' sets, set it to 4:3 and you will be able to watch 16:9 broadcasts without black bars above and below the picture.

Signal strength meter

An onscreen graphic that illustrates how strong the digital signal is. This can be affected by various things, such as your home's distance from the nearest transmitter, the weather or physical obstructions such as buildings. If your signal is weak, it may be a good idea to get a professional to upgrade your rooftop aerial.

Software updates

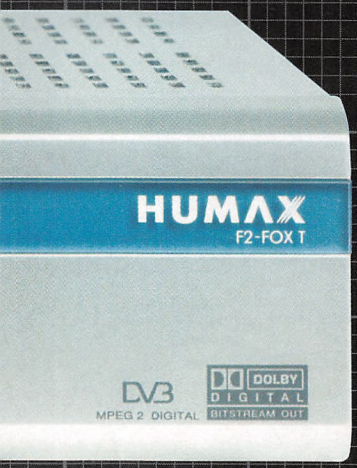
The software inside a Freeview adaptor can be updated using data transmitted over the air with the digital TV signal. These are usually received automatically – an onscreen message lets you know that an update has been received and is ready to be installed. You can also search for them manually. Software updates improve functionality, such as adding digital text and interactive capability, or can rectify glitches.

MPEG2

The AV compression standard used by digital terrestrial broadcasters – the same standard used on DVDs. It works at a fast bitrate and is capable of high quality pictures.

Digital Video Broadcasting (DVB)

A set of standards that defines MPEG2 terrestrial and satellite digital broadcasting. Freeview is DVB compliant.



Freeview: extra terrestrial TV!

How to get Freeview

FREEVIEW RECEIVERS
A set-top box that features a terrestrial digital TV tuner, capable of receiving all Freeview TV and radio channels.

IDTVs (INTEGRATED DIGITAL TELEVISION)
A TV with a built-in digital terrestrial tuner. There's no need for an external receiver, which means there's one less box and fewer cables to clutter up your system.

DVD COMBIS
Several DVD players have built in Freeview tuners, conveniently combining two bits of kit in one box. DVD recorders with Freeview tuners are thin on the ground but be the norm very soon.

FREEVIEW PVRs (Personal Video Recorders)
Hard-disk recorders with one or two built-in Freeview tuners, offering loads of sophisticated features such as pause live TV and simultaneous recording and playback.

VCR COMBIS
These are rare, but you can find VHS VCRs with a Freeview tuner, allowing you to record digital TV direct to tape.

Connections

RF input
1 This is how the terrestrial digital TV signal is fed into the adaptor – simply connect your existing rooftop or indoor aerial.

RF output/loopthrough
2 Most Freeview adaptors take the analogue TV signal from the RF input and pass it through to the RF output. This allows you to record analogue TV on a VCR or watch analogue channels on your TV – handy if you lose your Freeview signal for any reason.

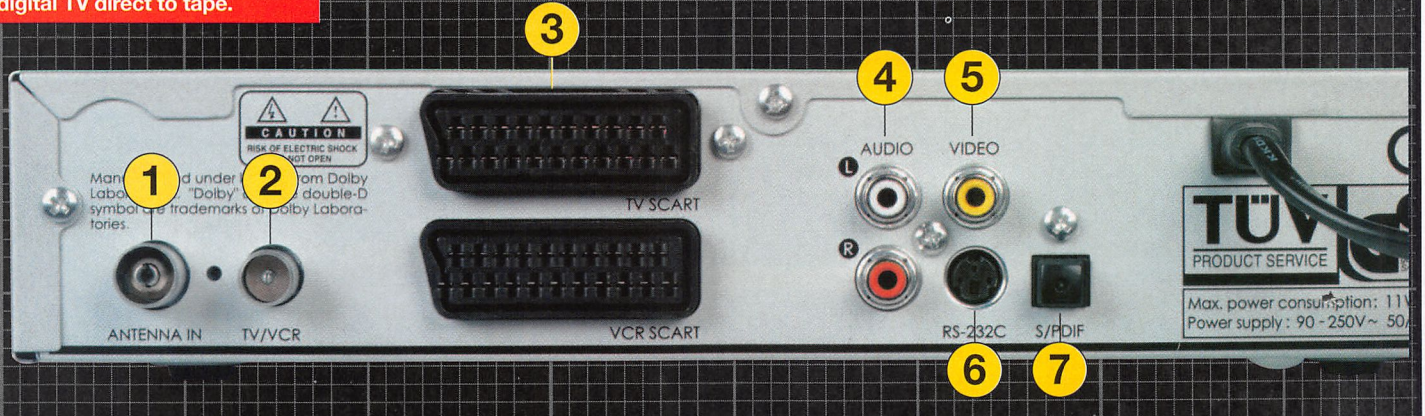
Scart output
3 The all-purpose socket that allows you to pipe video and audio from the adaptor to a TV or video recorder. In most cases, the Scart output labelled 'TV' will support RGB and composite video, while the Scart output labelled 'VCR' outputs composite video and very occasionally, S-video. Some entry-level Freeview adaptors only sport one Scart output, causing problems if you want to connect to a TV and VCR simultaneously.

Stereo audio output
4 These allow you to pipe two-channel analogue audio to an amplifier or hi-fi.

Video output
5 Plain old composite video. The lowest quality signal and to be avoided if possible.

RS232c
6 A PC connection found on only a handful of Freeview Adaptors.

Digital audio output
7 Adaptors with one of these outputs let you pipe stereo audio digitally to an amplifier, so you can activate Pro-Logic II and watch TV programmes in surround sound. In the unlikely even that Freeview starts broadcasting Dolby Digital or DTS multichannel soundtracks, then this is how you'll send them to your amplifier.



AV RECEIVERS

Features

Signal processing

Most receivers will give you the option of applying various pre-set sound programs to your audio signals. These tend to be mainly aimed at stereo music sources (eg 'Rock' or 'Stadium' settings), but you'll probably also find ones for DVD soundtracks designed to add extra reverb or presence to soundfields.

Whether you like them or not is a matter of personal taste, but we advise against pre-set sound programs as a rule. Adding an alien, sampled effect to soundtracks interferes with the way in which films were originally intended to be heard.

Integrated amplifiers

The integrated amp or receiver is by far the most common choice for a home cinema system. 'Integrated' simply means that the two stages – multichannel audio decoding and amplification – which are handled by separate components in high-end systems, have been bundled together in one handy box.

True audiophiles claim that separates mean superior sound, but this kind of quality almost invariably comes with a huge price tag attached and should only be bought, after advice, from dedicated AV outlets.

Integrated machines are still, however, capable of jaw-dropping quality and it's getting easier by the day to find machines with all the spec you'll need at increasingly reasonable prices.

Video

While primarily an audio device, amplifiers can also fulfil several important video functions. Firstly, a receiver's multiple video inputs enable it to act as a switching device between several sources (eg VCR, DVD, TV) which can be fed to one or more display devices.

Secondly, the amp usually sends additional information to your monitor along with the picture that enables you to control your receiver via an onscreen menu. This can be invaluable, especially when calibrating your speaker set-up, as it will often contain helpful graphics and it's invariably far easier to navigate the (sometimes dense) menus on a big screen than on the receiver's small LCD display.

The final function is the upconversion of lower-quality signals, such as S-video, into component form. This tends to be restricted to more expensive amps but is a handy way of getting the best from your video kit.

Even without upconversion circuitry, routing pictures though a receiver is a neat way of bringing several display devices within the scope of a single remote, particularly if that remote is able to 'learn' commands for other pieces of kit.

Power

Spec-sheet junkies will want the most grunt they can afford but it's worth taking into account the dimensions of your room, the size of your speakers and the likely reaction from your neighbours. A receiver's output power is measured in watts (W) per channel and this rating usually starts at about 40W and can go up to about 200W but this is rare for home cinema. It is important to find a receiver that matches the sensitivity of your speakers, as these are far more easily damaged by over-worked low-wattage amps than by too much power. For most purposes, something between 75 and 110W is more than adequate.

Automatic set-up

Some receivers are able to calibrate the output of each surround speaker according to the size and layout of your room. The receiver does this by using a microphone to pick up a test tone sent to each channel, the playback of which is then analysed and adjusted for optimum performance in the 'sweet spot' of your room.

Audio formats

New and improved sound formats are appearing all the time and this can make your decision as to what to buy that little bit harder.

Amp or receiver?

The difference between amplifiers and receivers is simply that receivers also feature a radio tuner and amplifiers do not. Radio was initially added to sell more amps in America but is undoubtedly handy and is such a common feature now, that premiums on its inclusion are irrelevant.

Learning remotes

As the receiver is the nerve centre of your home cinema set-up, it makes sense to be able to use its remote to control other pieces of kit and reduce the number of zappers on your coffee table. Many manufacturers supply remote controls which can be programmed (by keying in numerical codes) to operate DVD players, TVs and even digiboxes.

Digital versus analogue

Digital amps are smaller, cheaper and more efficient, which means they run cooler than their analogue counterparts. They also are unaffected by the load they are driving, which means that they will always produce the same amount of power, regardless of the impedance of your speakers.

However, analogue amps are generally credited by enthusiasts with superior sound performance. The slinkier dimensions and stylish looks of digital models should ensure a firm footing in the market before long, though.

Connections

Audio inputs

ELECTRICAL DIGITAL
1 This phono-type connection (often referred to as 'coaxial') accepts digital bitstream or PCM signals from DVD players or other digital equipment like CD players.

STEREO AUDIO
2 These sockets are almost invariably coloured red and white and carry analogue stereo signals. They can be used to carry the audio from a TV set or digibox or any analogue stereo hi-fi equipment. They can also be used for DVD players but you'll only get inferior quality, two-channel sound.

OPTICAL DIGITAL INPUTS
3 Performs the same function as the electrical digital socket via an optical cable with a Toslink connector. The difference between the two connections is highly subjective and therefore effectively negligible.

SIX-CHANNEL INPUTS
4 These phono plugs accept analogue signals from DVD-A/SACD players with onboard decoding for hi-resolution audio.

AM/FM INPUTS
5 These aerial jacks are only found on receivers and allow you to tune into radio stations.

Video inputs/outputs

COMPOSITE
6 This is the lowest quality connection and should be avoided if possible. However, it can be useful if you wish to route your VCR or games console through your amplifier.

S-VIDEO
7 This medium quality, four-pin plug is a decent connection for DVD players, S-VHS decks and some digiboxes. It's particularly handy in the absence of RGB Scart sockets.

COMPONENT
8 This is the highest quality video connection, which splits the signal into its constituent parts for cleaner, sharper pictures. You will definitely want to use this option if your DVD player and display device are progressive scan capable.

Audio outputs

BINDING POSTS
9 The de facto standard for hooking up amps to AV and hi-fi speakers. These are usually screw-down connections for bare wires, but will also normally be designed to accept sturdier banana-plugs.

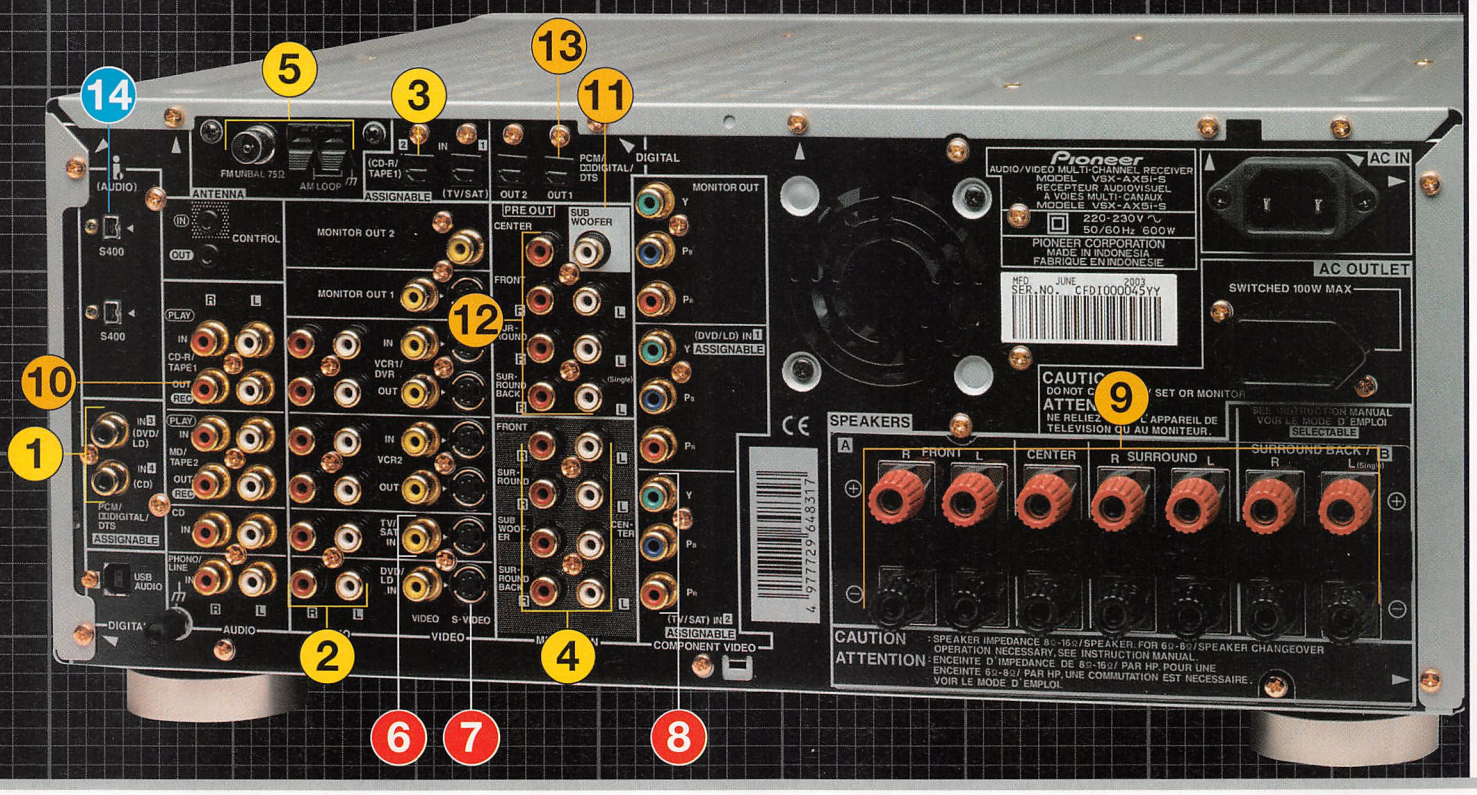
STEREO AUDIO
10 These can be used to output analogue stereo sound to the device upon which it is to be recorded, eg VCRs, tape decks or Minidiscs.

SUBWOOFER
11 This pre-out phono socket carries the un-amplified '.1' signal to your subwoofer, which will beef it up with its own on-board amplification.

PRE-OUTS
12 These are phono sockets carrying line-level (un-amplified) signals for amplification elsewhere. Can also be used for adding power amps if you want to upgrade your system later on.

OPTICAL DIGITAL OUTPUTS
13 These outputs feed digital recording media, such as Minidisc decks.

i.LINK (aka FIREWIRE)
14 A connection used as a high-end alternative digital audio input with DVD-Audio/SACD players that sport the relevant outputs – eliminating the need to use six-channel analogue phonos.



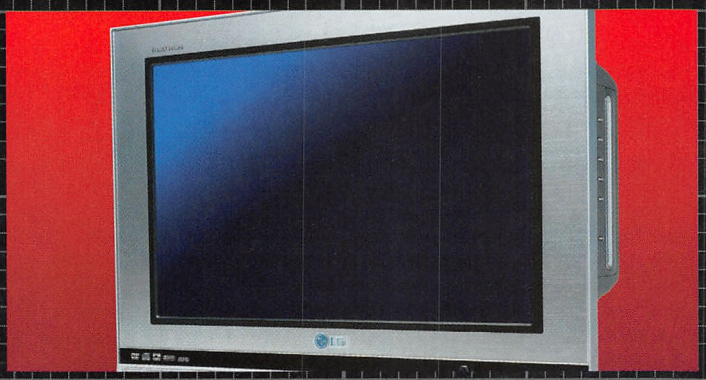
Speakers

SPEAKER SWITCHING
Most amps are able to drive two sets of speakers. The 'A' set would normally be your main home cinema package, while the 'B' option could be a set located in another room.

SPRINGCLIPS
These low-quality speaker connections are often found on cheaper receivers, especially with all-in-one packages. These should be avoided at all costs, unless your budget is really tight.

TEST DATA EXPLAINED

What Video and Widescreen TV gives you the lowdown on the technical tests published alongside our reviews



DVD Players

SIGNAL-TO-NOISE

(S/N) ratio

This specifies the numerical relationship between the picture (the wanted 'signal') and components added by the player's electronics (the unwanted 'noise'). The higher the (negative) figure, the better the rating. In the worst DVD players, noise can be sometimes seen as a fine 'grain'. But in general, the noise added by DVD players is minimal – they have a far-superior S/N ratio to VHS VCRs, which introduce obvious background 'mush'.

JITTER

In the video domain, jitter – also known as 'timebase errors' – can cause a host of problems, including picture instability and colour errors. DVD players, being digital products, suffer far less from jitter than analogue VCRs. Here, a poor jitter reading points to badly-designed timing chains or switching power supplies. Problems with the latter can also introduce jitter into the audio domain, subtly 'veiling' detail and affecting dynamic range. So we measure that too! In all cases, lower figures are preferable.

FREQUENCY RESPONSE

With a special test DVD, containing a 'multiburst' pattern with several high-frequency test patterns, we measure the player's output at 5.8MHz. The higher the output (a lower negative number here!), the more likely the player is to resolve fine picture details. The best players may have an output of -0.5dB at 5.8MHz; with most hardware, the figure is closer to -2dB. We test composite, S-video and component outputs independently.

COLOUR ('CHROMA') MEASUREMENTS

We employ two of these. The first, 'chroma AM/PM', measures the amplitude (AM) and phase/timing (PM) errors that can affect the chroma channel. Respectively, these errors influence saturation and hue variations of the reproduced colour.

The second, 'chroma crosstalk', looks for any unwanted leakage of colour information into the luminance channel of S-video outputs. For all measurements, a higher (negative) figure is better.

Details

TEST DATA

Video jitter: 3ns (very good)
Signal-to-noise ratio: -77.9dB (excellent)
Chrominance AM/PM: -69.4dB/-61.9dB (excellent/average)
Chroma crosstalk: -64.7dB (excellent)
Frequency response at 5.8MHz: (S-video): -4.67dB (below average) (composite): -4.46dB (below average)
Audio jitter: 21,588.8ps (abysmal!)

TVs

COLOUR

We look for any anomalies in the reproduction of colour information. If 'bleed' is experienced, for example, it's likely that the 'chroma' (a technical term for the colour part of the picture) is mis-timed with respect to the 'luminance' (the brightness or greyscale, part). This could be a design limitation or poor alignment in the factory. A coloured patch on a conventional TV screen, meanwhile, suggests a CRT purity error.

GEOMETRY

This refers to geometric errors in the reproduced picture and is traditionally associated with CRT TVs. Driving a CRT is quite tricky and designers have to build in correction circuitry to minimise picture distortion. Loosely related to geometry is 'convergence', a technique that ensures each electron gun only strikes the phosphors it is associated with. Any errors show up as colour 'fringes' – usually on the outer extremes of the picture. LCD and plasma screens don't suffer from geometry or convergence errors.

FREQUENCY RESPONSE

Using a special test signal, we can assess how a TV reproduces higher frequencies (and, for that matter, how effective the set's colour decoder is at separating chroma and luminance). The better the upper frequency response, the greater the amount of fine picture detail the TV should be able to convey. It's usually influenced by the resolution of the display – the number of pixels (LCD and plasma) or phosphor stripes (CRTs). But the electronics driving the display are critically important too.

Details

TEST DATA

Colour: fair – sharp, noiseless edges and decent saturation, but a little bleed
Convergence: excellent
Geometry: excellent
Frequency response: excellent – clear to 5.8MHz

Video Recorders

VIDEO JITTER
Signal-to-noise (S/N)
Ratio and Chroma AM/PM
Same tests as those employed with DVD players, but with test generator-sourced signals recorded by the machine (in case you were wondering, we use a special test disc when measuring DVD players!). Note that VHS recorders fare a lot worse than DVD recorders in all these tests.

A good VHS machine may have a S/N ratio of -45dB. A DVD recorder, in contrast, can muster -60dB or more. Likewise, a good chroma AM or PM figure for an analogue recorder is -45dB as against a typical DVD recorder's -60dB or so. Digital recorders have jitter readings of 5ns or lower; a VHS recorder may have jitter measurements a 100 times higher!

FREQUENCY RESPONSE (digital recorders)
With DVD recorders, we record a multiburst pattern – sourced from a broadcast-standard test-signal generator – onto a blank medium or the hard disk. Several recordings, in the various modes offered by the manufacturer, are made. We then play the recordings, and measure the output at 4MHz. In all cases, the lower the (negative) figure, the better!

The 'economy' settings of the average recorder usually work at half the horizontal resolution, and as such there's little or no output (-70dB) at 4MHz! The same is not true of higher-quality settings, which have the same resolution as DVD/digital TV. That's why there is little difference from the original broadcast. For these modes, 4MHz figures better than -2dB are typical.

FREQUENCY RESPONSE (analogue recorders)
We record a special test signal onto tape. It's then played back, and we analyse the output levels at a range of different frequencies. With (low-bandwidth) VHS recorders, we concentrate on the outputs at 2MHz and 2.5MHz. Super VHS (S-VHS) and S-VHS ET machines have a higher luminance bandwidth, and can thus capture more fine detail. In these cases, we also examine the output at frequencies of 3 and 3.5MHz. In all cases, the lower the (negative) figure, the better!

Details

TEST DATA
DVD PLAYBACK
Video jitter: 4ns (very good)
Signal-to-noise ratio: -62.1dB (average)
Chrominance AM/PM: -73.6dB/-66.1dB (excellent/very good)
Chroma crosstalk: -66.3dB (excellent)
Frequency response at 5.8MHz:
(S-video): -0.27dB (excellent)
(composite): 0.24dB (excellent)
Audio jitter: 458.7ps (average)
RECORDING
Chrominance AM/PM: -54.5dB/-53.6dB (excellent/excellent)
Frequency response at 4.8MHz:
Fine: -0.7dB (excellent)
SP: -0.9dB (excellent)
LP: -23.9dB (average)
EP: -28.2dB (average)

AV Receivers

POWER OUTPUT
The measured power output of the amplifier, two channels simultaneously driven, into 4Ω and 8Ω loads until distortion reaches a level of between 0.1 and 0.5%. We compare these 'real world' figures with the ones specified by the manufacturer. Higher figures are preferable – there's less chance of running out of steam during busy movie sequences – but do not necessarily equate to a subjectively better-sounding amplifier.

FREQUENCY RESPONSE
We inject special test signals between 20Hz to 20kHz – a 'frequency band' that spans the generally-accepted limits of human hearing – into the amplifier and assess how it responds. Ideally, the amplifier, the tone controls of which are turned off or set to their 'flat' positions, would give a 'straight-line' response across the band, with no dips or peaks. Usually, there's a slight deviation, which we specify in decibels. The lower, the better.

FIDELITY FIREWALL
The power output that can be delivered, two channels simultaneously driven into 8Ω loads, at a maximum distortion level of 0.05%. These figures represent the type of power output that can be expected during high-quality listening. As before, larger figures are preferable but do not necessarily mean the amp sounds better from the reviewer's point of view.

Details

TEST DATA
Manufacturer's output:
75W per channel
(20Hz-20kHz, 8Ω, 0.08% THD)
Power output
@ 1kHz (2-channel):
90W (8Ω, 0.1% THD);
135W (4Ω, 0.1% THD)
Power output @ 1kHz (5-channel):
75W (8Ω, 0.1% THD); 80W (4Ω, 0.1% THD)
Fidelity firewall:
90W @ 0.05% THD (8Ω)
Distortion
@ 50W: 0.006% (8Ω, 1kHz)
Frequency response:
20Hz-20kHz ± 0.13dB

TECH LABS Q&A

Our unique testing facilities give our reviews a reliability unrivalled in this industry. Here we explain what we do and how you benefit from it

All consumer electronic kit reviewed in *What Video and Widescreen TV* is independently tested by our Tech Labs facility, in addition to being subjectively auditioned by a resident team of reviewers.

This is to ensure that our buying advice is based on quantifiable data and not just individual opinion. This is why all our Best Buys come with a guarantee of excellence. The following FAQ reveals more about the Tech Labs.

Q What do the Tech labs actually do?
A Using state-of-the-art measurement tools, the Tech Labs run a series of identical tests on everything from standard DVD Players, through DVD recorders, amplifiers and receivers, to screens.

We know that all manufacturers play a numbers game in order to entice you into buying their products, be it a claimed power output for an all-in-one home cinema system, or outrageous contrast claims for plasma and LCD TVs.

We also know that these numbers are meaningless if they can't be compared with products from a different manufacturer.

Q So how do I use this information when it's printed in the magazine?
A You don't need to be a boffin to use our Tech Labs data. Consider it as a unique reader resource. You can directly compare the performance figures measured by the Tech Labs, from product to product and from month to month, confident in the knowledge that Product A really does outperform Product B.

Q Who owns the Tech Labs? Are they really independent?
A The Tech Labs are wholly owned and used by *What Video and Widescreen TV* and its affiliated AV magazines (*Home Cinema Choice*, *What Home Cinema* and *What Plasma & LCD*). No other publisher has access to the Labs. This should be borne in mind when taking buying advice from other magazines and websites.

Q Does this mean that all the magazines which use the Tech Labs come up with the same product reviews and recommendations?
A No. Each magazine weighs the data against individual editorial criteria. *What Video & Widescreen TV*, for example, rates a product's price heavily into its recommendations. *Home Cinema Choice*, on the other hand, rates products primarily on performance and not value.

Q What kind of credentials do the Tech Labs have?
A With over a decade's specialist consumer electronics testing behind it, you can take comfort in the fact that the Tech Labs team really do know what they are talking about. Our technology partners represent the most experienced and professional measurement and calibration companies in the world: Snell & Wilcox, Paul Miller Audio Research, Techtronix and Sencore among others.

Q What do the big companies think about the Tech Labs?
A We routinely hold open house briefings with delegates from the world's biggest consumer electronics companies. Engineers and marketeers are shown in confidence all our test procedures and encouraged to duplicate our tests off-site. The aim is to pool knowledge and help standardise measurement claims in product literature.

Q What other work are the Tech Labs involved in?
A The facility is available for hire by any brand or distributor interested in bespoke testing. For example, a company may need to choose between five DVD player designs, prior to signing a UK distribution deal. We can tell that distributor exactly how these players compare. The Tech Labs also exclusively test all TV screens for UK high-street retailer Comet, which uses the data to help its customers choose which TV to buy.

style

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Buyer's Guide

The essential guide to TVs, DVD, digital recorders, home cinema, projectors, surround sound and more

The What Video and Widescreen TV Buyer's Guide should be your first port of call when you want to buy new kit. Once you've settled upon how much you want to spend, decided which features are absolute must-haves and which you can live without, this handy section tells you what's out there and what our expert panel of reviewers thought about it.

You'll find extra guidance in our Top 3s that accompany each section, showing you what we think is the best kit money can buy.

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DVD PLAYERS

1 Samsung DVD-HD945

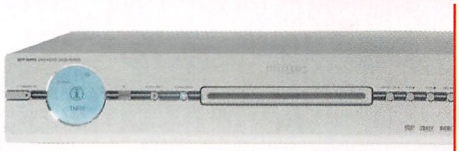
£180 DVD player
● Reviewed: Issue 292

This state-of-the-art deck represents extraordinary value for money – not only has it got an HDMI jack, but it also offers DVD-A and SACD playback, as well as just about everything else you can think of. Picture quality is of the highest order too, making it a real triumph.

2 Marantz DV7600

£600 DVD player
● Reviewed: Issue 298

It's pricey by today's standards, but this deck can do pretty much everything, and in fine style too. It's got an HDMI output, with upscaling to 720p and 1080i to back it up, progressive scan and DVD-Audio playback. Lovingly built and the rival of just about anything at any price.



3 Philips DVP9000S

£400 DVD player
● Reviewed: Issue 299

A stunning-looking player backed up with an HDMI output, a Faroudja upscaling chipset and 'TrueLife' technology to boost colour/contrast. Its performance is highly accomplished in terms of both sound and vision and the price tag looks a steal.

DVD Players

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	TOTAL SCARTS	RGB	S-VIDEO	COMPONENT VIDEO	HDMI/DVI OUTPUT	PAL PROG SCAN	DOLBY DIG DECODER	DVD-AUDIO PLAYBACK	SACD PLAYBACK	OPTICAL DIGITAL	ELECTRICAL DIGITAL	MPEG4 PLAYBACK	MP3 PLAYBACK	JPEG VIEWER	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Arcam DiVA DV78	£700	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	Apr-04	★★★★★
Arcam DiVA DV79	£1,000	1	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	290	★★★★★
AMW P80L	£89	1	✗	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	Feb-04	★★★★
Bush DVD2045	£TBA	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	n/a	
Bush DVD2043	£TBA	1	✓	✗	✓	✗/✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	n/a	
Cambridge Audio 540D	£230	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	Jun-04	★★★★★
Cambridge Audio DVD57	£200	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓		✓	✓	n/a	
Chili DVD-MX205 USB	£55	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	299	★★★
CyberHome CH-DVD412	£80	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓		✗	✓	✓	n/a	
CyberHome CH-DVD452	£50	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓		✗	✓	✓	n/a	
CyberHome CH-DVD462	£60	1	✓	✓	✗	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	295	★★★★★
Denon DVD-1710	£130	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Sep-04	★★★★★
Denon DVD-2200	£600	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	Mar-04	★★★★★
Denon DVD-1910	£230	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	294	★★★★★
Denon DVD-2910	£600	1	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/a	
Denon DVD-3910	£850	1	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	290	★★★★★
Denon DVD-A11	£1,700	2	✓	✓	✓	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	Apr-04	★★★★★
Harman Kardon DVD 22	£190	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	294	★★★★★
Harman Kardon DVD 506	£300	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓		✓	✓	n/a	
Hitachi DV-P745E	£TBA	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	n/a	
Hitachi PDV302 (PORTABLE)	£TBA	0	✗	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	n/a	
Humax DV-1000T	£99	2	1	✓	✗	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	n/a	
Goodmans GDB 400 DVD	£150	2	✓	✗	✗	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	Jun-04	★★★★★
Goodmans GDVD161DX	£60	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dec-04	★★★★
Jamo DVD-593	£150	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	294	★★★★★
JVC XV-N212	£80	1	✓	✗	✗	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dec-04	★★★★
JVC XV-N320	£70	1	✓		✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗			✗	✓	✓	n/a	
JVC XV-N322S	£55	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	299	★★★★
JVC XV-N55SL	£150	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗		✓	✓	n/a	
JVC XV-NP10S	£160	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	Jan-05	★★★★
JVC XV-NA77SL	£200	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	Mar-04	★★★★★
KiSS DP-558	£300	2	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	300	★★★★
Lafayette LFDV969	£160	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	May-04	★★★★
Loewe Certos	£2,750	2	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗		✓	✓	n/a	
Loewe Xemix 6222 PS	£TBA	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	n/a	
Loewe Auro 8116	£775	2	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗		✓	✓	n/a	
Marantz DV4500	£200	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	n/a	
Marantz DV6500	£400	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	n/a	
Marantz DV7600	£600	1	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	298	★★★★★
Marantz DV9500	£1,500	1	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	n/a	
Marantz DV12S2	£2,000	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	n/a	
Mustek DVB-T202	£100	2	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	295	★★★★
NAD T512	£250	1	✓	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	Feb-04	★★★★
Onkyo DV-SP501	£300	1	✓	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	Mar-04	★★★★
Onkyo DV-SP502	£300	1	✓	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	293	★★★★
Onkyo DV-SP1000	£2,800	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	290	★★★★★

DVD Players Continued...

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	TOTAL SCARTS	RGB	S-VIDEO	COMPONENT VIDEO	HDMI/DVI OUTPUT	PAL PROG SCAN	DOLBY DIG DECODER	DVD-AUDIO PLAYBACK	SACD PLAYBACK	OPTICAL DIGITAL OUT	ELECTRICAL DIGITAL OUT	MPEG4 PLAYBACK	MP3 PLAYBACK	JPEG VIEWER	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Panasonic DVD-S27	£90	1	✓	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	Jan-05	★★★★
Panasonic DVD-S97	£300	1	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	292	★★★★★
Panasonic DVD-F65	£180	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗(ntsc)	✓(2ch)	✓(2ch)	✗	✓	✗		✓	✓	n/a	
Panasonic DVD-LX8 (PORTABLE)	£700	0	✗	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	Sep-04	★★★★★
Philips DVP720SA	£150	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	Sep-04	★★★★
Philips DVP900SA	£300	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	n/a	
Philips DVP5100	£65	1	✓	✗	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	n/a	
Philips DVP9000S	£400	1	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	299	★★★★★
Philips PET1000	£350	0	✗	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	300	★★★★★
Pioneer DV-2750	£80	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	297	★★★★
Pioneer DV-370	£80	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	Dec-04	★★★★★
Pioneer DV-380	£80	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	301	★★★★
Pioneer DV-470	£100	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	Dec-04	★★★★★
Pioneer DV-565A	£250	2	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	Mar-04	★★★★★
Pioneer DV-575A	£150	2	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	Oct-04	★★★★★
Pioneer DV-775Ai	£500	2	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	n/a	
Pioneer DV-668AV	£600	2	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	n/a	
Pioneer DV-868AVi	£800	2	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	May-04	★★★★★
Ronin M280 (PORTABLE)	£230	0	✗	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	Jun-04	★★★★
Ronin P215	£30	1	✗	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	Jul-04	★★★★★
Samsung DVD-E335	£130	2	✓	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗(ntsc)	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗		✓	✗	n/a	
Samsung DVD-HD945	£180	1	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	292	★★★★★
Samsung DVD-L1200 (PORTABLE)	£1,000	0	✗	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	Sep-04	★★★★★
Samsung DVD-P345	£110	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	Aug-04	★★★★★
Sony DVP-NS30	£65	1	✓	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	299	★★★★
Sony DVP-NS585P	£160	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	Sep-04	★★★★
Thomson DTH311U	£120	1	✗	✗	✗	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	Jan-04	★★★★
Toshiba SD-150E	£50	1	✓	✗	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	297	★★★★
Toshiba SD-340E	£90	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	Oct-04	★★★★★
Toshiba SD-350E	£100	1	✓	✗	✓	✓/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	300	★★★★★
Toshiba SD-P1400	£400	0	✗	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	Sep-04	★★★★★
Toshiba SD-P1600 (PORTABLE)	£170	0	✗	✗	✗	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	301	★★★
Yamada PDIX-770 (PORTABLE)	£210	0	✓	✗	✗	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	297	★★★
Yamada DVX-6700	£60	1	✓	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	293	★★★★
Yamaha DVD-S557	£120	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	298	★★★★★
Yamaha DVD-S657	£160	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	301	★★★★
Yamaha DVD-S1500	£375	1	✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	300	★★★★★
Yamaha DVD-6500X	£60	1	✗	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	296	★★★★

DVD/VCR Combis

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	TOTAL SCARTS	RGB SCARTS	S-VIDEO	COMPONENT VIDEO	HDMI/DVI OUTPUT	PROG SCAN	OPTICAL DIGITAL OUT	ELECTRICAL DIGITAL OUT	MPEG4 PLAYBACK	MP3/WMA PLAYBACK	JPEG VIEWER	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Bush DVHRS02	£225	2	1	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓/✗	✓	296	★★★★
Hitachi DV-PF7E	£TBA	2	1	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓/✗	✓	n/a	
JVC DR-MV1	£500	2	1	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓/✗	✓	Oct-04	★★★★
JVC HR-XVS30 (S-VHS)	£230	2	0	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓/✓	✓	May-04	★★★★★
JVC HR-XV2	£250	2	1	✓		✗/✗		✓	✗				n/a	
Panasonic DMR-E75V	£500	2	2	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓/✗	✗	Sep-04	★★★★★
Panasonic DMR-ES30VEB	£300	2	2	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓/✓	✓	295	★★★★
Panasonic NV-VP31	£200	2	1	✗	✓	✗/✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓/✓	✓	Jul-04	★★★★
Philips DVD755VR	£230	2	2	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓/✗	✓	n/a	
Samsung DVD-CM350	£450	2	1	✓		✗/✗		✓	✓				n/a	
Sanyo DC-TS3000	£300	2	2	✓		✗/✗		✗	✗				n/a	
Sharp DV-RW250H	£300	2	2	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓/✓	✓	295	★★★★
Sony SLV-D930	£150	2	1	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓/✗	✓	296	★★★★
Sony SLV-D950	£200	2	1	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓/✗	✓	Aug-04	★★★★
Toshiba SD-34VB	£170	2	1	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	Jan 05	★★★★★

DIGITAL RECORDERS

1 Pioneer DVR-630H

£600 HDD/DVD recorder
● Reviewed: Issue 299

The DVR-630H is extremely versatile, with plenty of sockets, improved picture quality, excellent editing and dubbing features and a whopping 711hrs recording time on HDD. The only thing missing is an HDMI port, but this recorder is unbeatable at this price.

2 Sony RDR-HXD910

£700 HDD/DVD/Freeview combi recorder
● Reviewed: Issue 299

An elegant design plus integrated Freeview tuner, HDMI port and the return of 'intelligent chapter creation' to skip past adverts. Almost all types of blank disc are supported, outputs are plentiful and a large helping of technical wizardry equals good picture quality.

3 Topfield TF5800

£300 Freeview PVR
● Reviewed: Issue 298

This PVR boasts some clever technology, like PC connectivity to transfer MP3 files and twin tuners that let you make overlapping recordings while watching a third live channel. Extremely sharp pictures and fast operation across the board make this a winner.

Digital Recorders

Key: An=Analogue Di=Digital

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	RECORDING FORMATS	HARD-DISK CAPACITY	MAX RECORD TIME	No. OF RECORD MODES	TUNER TYPE	RGB IN/OUT	COMPONENT VIDEO OUT	S-VIDEO OUT	OPTICAL/ ELECTRICAL DIGITAL OUT	i.LINK IN/OUT	PAL PROG SCAN	GUIDE PLUS/ VIDEO PLUS	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Akai ADR5800Di	£150	DVD-R/RW, DVD+R/RW	n/a	8hrs	4	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✗	294	★★★★
Akai DR-R5800PST	£370	DVD-R/RW, DVD+R/RW	n/a	8hrs	4	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✗	294	★★★★
Bush IDPVR02	£TBA	PVR	40GB	20hrs	3	Di	✗/✗	✗	✗	✗/✗	✗/✗	✗	✓/✓	n/a	
Bush IDVRHS02	£TBA	DVD+R/+RW	n/a	6hrs	4	Di	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✗/✗	✗	✓/✓	n/a	
CyberHome CH-DVR750	£150	DVD+R/+RW	n/a	6hrs	5	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✗	✗/✗	May-04	★★★★
CyberHome CH-DVR1600	£100	DVD+R/+RW	n/a	5.5hrs	5	An	✗/✓	✗	✓	✗/✓	✓/✗	✗	✗/✗	297	★★★
Digifusion FVRT100	£250	HDD	40GB	60hrs	3	Di	✗/✓	✗	✓	✗/✗	✗/✗	✗	✓/✗	Aug-04	★★★
Ellion DVR-530S	£150	DVD+R, DVD+RW	n/a	6hrs	4	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✗	291	★★★★
Funai DRV-B2737	£200	DVD-R, DVD-RW, VHS	n/a	10hrs	6	An	✗/✓	✗	✓	✓/✓	✗/✗	✗	✗/✗	299	★★★★
Goodmans GDVD300R	£215	DVD+R, DVD+RW	n/a	6hrs	5	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✗/✗	✗	✗/✓	Nov-04	★★★
Goodmans GDVDR305DVBT	£150	DVD+R, DVD+RW	n/a	6hrs	4	Di	✗/✓	✗	✓	✓/✓	✗/✗	✗	✗/✗	300	★★★
Goodmans GHDD177DVDR	£200	HDD, DVD+R/+RW	80GB	100hr	5	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✓	301	★★★
Hitachi DV-RX7000	£280	DVD-RAM, DVD-R/RW	n/a	6hrs	4	An	✓/✓	✗	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✗	✗/✓	290	★★★★★
Humax DRP-560	£320	DVD+R, DVD+RW	n/a	6hrs	5	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✗	✗/✓	Aug-04	★★★★
Humax PVR-8000T/80	£170	HDD	80GB	40hrs	1	Dig	✗/✓	✓	✗	✓/✓	✗/✗	✗	✗	Jan-05	★★★★
Inverto IDL-7000T	£220	HDD	80GB	60hrs	2	Dig	✗/✓	✗	✓	✓/✓	✗/✗	✗	✗/✗	295	★★★★
JVC DR-M10	£250	DVD-RAM, DVD-RW, DVD-R	n/a	8hrs	5	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✗/✗	✓	✗/✓	290	★★★★
JVC DR-MH20	£400	HDD, DVD-RAM, DVD-RW, DVD-R	80GB	147 hrs	6	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✓	Dec-04	★★★★
JVC DR-MH30	£500	HDD, DVD-RAM, DVD-RW, DVD-R	160GB	300 hrs	6	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✓	Nov-04	★★★★
JVC DR-MH50	£550	DVD-RAM, DVD-RW, DVD-R	250GB	473hrs	5	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✗/✗	✓	✗/✓	295	★★★★
JVC DR-MH200S	£365	HDD, DVD-RAM, /-RW/-R	160GB	300hrs	5	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✓	300	★★★
JVC DR-MV1	£350	DVD-RAM, DVD-RW, DVD-R, VHS	n/a	8hrs	6	An	✗/✓	✓	✗	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✓	Oct-04	★★★★★
JVC DR-MX1	£700	HDD, DVD-RAM, DVD-R/RW, VCR	160GB	300 hrs	7	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✓	291	★★★★
KiSS DP508	£340	HDD	80GB	n/a		An		✗/✓	✗	✓	✓/✓	✗/✗	✓	Apr-04	★★★★
Lite-On LVW-5045	£350	HDD, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW	160GB	204 hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✓	291	★★★★★
LG DR4810	£300	DVD-RW	n/a	4hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✗/✗	✗	✗/✓	Jun-04	★★★
Loewe Centros 1102	£450	DVD-R/RW, DVD+R/+RW	n/a	5hrs	4	An	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✗	✓/✓	290	★★★
MiCO Espejo R311	£200	DVD+R, DVD+RW	n/a	n/a	2	An	✓/✗	✗	✗	✗/✗	✗/✗	✗	✗/✓	Mar-04	★★★★
Mustek R100B	£200	DVD+RW, DVD+R	n/a	6hrs	2	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✗	✗/✗	Jun-04	★★★
Mustek R580	£250	HDD, DVD+RW, DVD+R	80GB	104hrs	5	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✓	297	★★
Nissan DR-200BB	£170	DVD+RW, DVD+R	n/a	6hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✗/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✗	291	★★★
Panasonic DMR-E55	£300	DVD-RAM, DVD-R	n/a	8hrs	2	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✗/✗	✓	✗/✓	Aug-04	★★★★★
Panasonic DMR-E65	£400	DVD-RAM, DVD-R	n/a	8hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✗/✓	Oct-04	★★★★★
Panasonic DMR-E85	£600	HDD, DVD-RAM, DVD-R	80GB	142hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✗/✗	✓	✗/✓	Jul-04	★★★★★
Panasonic DMR-E95H	£800	HDD, DVD-RAM, DVD-R	160GB	284hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✗/✗	✓	✗/✓	Nov-04	★★★★★
Panasonic DMR-E500H	£1,300	HDD, DVD-RAM, DVD-R	400GB	709hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✗/✓	Nov-04	★★★★★
Panasonic DMR-EH50	£400	HDD, DVD-RAM, -R/+R	80GB	142hrs	4	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✗/✗	✓	✗/✓	294	★★★★★
Panasonic DMR-EH60D	£500	HDD, DVD-RAM, -R/-RW/+R	200GB	355hrs	4	An/Di	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✓/✓	300	★★★★★
Panasonic DMR-EH80V	£570	HDD, DVD,DVD-RAM, VHS	200GB	355hrs	7	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✗/✓	299	★★★
Panasonic DMR-ES10	£200	DVD-RAM, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R		8hrs	4	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗/✗	✓	✗/✓	293	★★★★★
Panasonic TU-CTH100	£260	HDD	80GB	45hrs	1	Di	✗/✓	✗	✓	✓/✗	✗/✗	✗	✗/✗	298	★★★★

Digital Recorders Continued...

Key: An=Analogue Di=Digital

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	RECORDING FORMATS	HARD-DISK CAPACITY	MAX RECORD TIME	No. OF RECORD MODES	TUNER TYPE	RGB IN/OUT	COMPONENT VIDEO OUT	S-VIDEO OUT	OPTICAL/ ELECTRICAL DIGITAL OUT	i.LINK IN/OUT	PAL PROG SCAN	GUIDE PLUS/ VIDEO PLUS	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Philips DVDR75	£600	DVD+RW, DVD+R	n/a	6hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✗	✓	✗/✓	✓/✗	✗	✗/✓	Mar-04	★★★★
Philips DVDR615	£200	DVD+R, DVD+RW	n/a	8hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✗	✓	✓/✗	✗/✗	✗/✗	✗/✓	293	★★★★
Philips DVDR630VR	£400	DVD+R, DVD+RW	n/a	6hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✗/✓		n/a	
Philips DVDR725H	£650	DVD+RW, DVD+R	160GB	204hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✓/✓	291	★★★★
Philips HDRW720	£550	DVD+RW, DVD+R	80GB	8hrs	2	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✗	✓/✓	Nov-04	★★★
Pioneer DVR-420H	£550	HDD, DVD-RW, DVD-R	80GB	6hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✗	✓	✓/✗	✗/✗	✗	✗/✓	Nov-04	★★★★★
Pioneer DVR-433H	£350	HDD, DVD-RW, DVD-R	80GB	6hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✗/✗	✓	✗/✓	298	★★★★★
Pioneer DVR-520H	£600	HDD, DVD-RW, DVD-R	80GB	6hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✗	✓	✓/✗	✓/✗	✗	✗/✓	Sep-04	★★★★★
Pioneer DVR-630H	£600	HDD, DVD, DVD-R DL	250GB	711hrs	7	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✓/✓	299	★★★★★
Pioneer DVR-720H	£750	HDD, DVD-RW, DVD-R	160GB	6hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✗	✓	✓/✗	✓/✗	✗	✗/✓	Aug-04	★★★★★
Pioneer DVR-920H	£1300	HDD, DVD-RW, DVD-R	250GB	433hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓	✓/✓	290	★★★★★
Pioneer DVR-5100H	£800	DVD-RW, DVD-R, HDD	80GB	102hrs	2	An	✗/✓	✗	✓	✓/✗	✓/✓	✗	✗/✓	Jan-04	★★★★
Sagem PVR6240	£130	HDD	40GB	20hrs	1	Di	✗/✓	✗	✗	✓/✗	✗/✗	✗	✗/✗	298	★★★
Samsung DVD-R100E	£200	DVD-RW, DVD-R	n/a	6hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✗	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✗	✗/✗	292	★★★★
Sanyo DVR-H200	£400	HDD, DVD+R/+RW, CD-R/-RW	160GB	198hrs	5	An	✓/✓	✓	✗	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✓	300	★★★★
Sanyo DVR-V100E	£200	DVD+R/+RW, VHS	n/a	6hrs	4	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✗/✓	✗/✗	✓	✓/✓	299	★★★
Sharp DV-HR300H	£500	DVD-RW, DVD-R, HDD	80GB	100hrs	2	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✗	✗/✓	May-04	★★★★
Sharp DV-HR350H	£500	DVD-RW, DVD-R, HDD	120GB	150hrs	2	An	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✗/✓	✗	✗/✓	n/a	
Sharp DV-HR480H	£500	DVD-RW, DVD-R, HDD	250GB	312hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✓/✓	300	★★★★
Sharp DV-RW250H	£250	DVD-RW, DVD-R	n/a	6hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✓	✗	✗/✓	✗/✗	✓	✗/✗	n/a	
Sony RDR-GX210	£250	DVD+R/RW, DVD-R/RW	n/a	6hrs	4	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✓	N/a	
Sony RDR-GX700	£400	DVD+R/RW, DVD-R/RW	n/a	6hrs	2	An	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✓	Dec-04	★★★★★
Sony RDR-GXD500	£320	DVD+R/RW, DVD-R/RW	n/a	6hrs	2	Di	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✗/✗	✓	✗/✓	Jan-05	★★★★★
Sony RDR-HX100	£900	DVD+R/RW, DVD-R/RW	250GB	325hrs	6	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✓	Jan-05	★★★★★
Sony RDR-HX510	£400	DVD+R/RW, DVD-R/RW HDD	80GB	134hrs	9	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✗/✗	✓	✗/✓	296	★★★★★
Sony RDR-HXD910	£700	DVD, DVD+R DL, HDD	250GB	428hrs	9	Di	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✗	299	★★★★★
Tatung TDVR600S	£200	DVD+R, DVD+RW	n/a	8hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✗	✓	✗/✗	291	★★★★
Thomson DHD-4000	£180	HDD	40	26hrs	2	Di	✓/✓	✗	✓	✓/✗	✗/✗	✗		293	★★★★★
Thomson DTH-8005	£500	DVD+R, DVD+RW	n/a	8hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✗	✓	✓/✓	✗/✗	✗	✗/✓	Aug-04	★★★
Thomson DTH-8040	£350	DVD+R, DVD+RW	n/a	8hrs	2	An	✗/✓	✗	✓	✓/✗	✗/✗	✗	✗/✓	290	★★★
Topfield TF5800	£300	HDD	160GB	88hrs	1	Di	✗/✓	✗	✓	✓/✗	✗/✗	✗	✗/✗	298	★★★★★
Toshiba D-R1	£400	DVD-R/RW, RAM	n/a	6hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓	✗/✓	Mar-04	★★★
Toshiba RD-XS34	£350	DVD-R/RW, RAM HDD	160GB	208hrs	5	An	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✗/✗	✓	✗/✓	296	★★★★★
Yamada DVR-8000	£250	DVD+R, DVD+RW	n/a	6hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✓	✗	✓/✗	✗/✗	✓	✗/✗	Sep-04	★★★
Yamada DVR-8100	£140	DVD+R, DVD+RW	n/a	6hrs	2	An	✓/✓	✗	✓	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✗/✗	292	★★★★
Yamada DVR-9000H	£260	HDD, DVD+R, DVD+RW	80GB	96hrs	4	An	✓/✓	✓	✗	✓/✗	✓/✗	✓	✗/✗	297	★★★★

Buying Tips: Digital Recorders

When buying a DVD recorder, you have to consider which recordable DVD format you want to use. There's a choice of three rewriteable formats, DVD-RAM, DVD+RW and DVD-RW, and two 'write-once' formats, DVD-R and DVD+R. There are still no DVD recorders that support all five formats, but several are able to record on four of them.

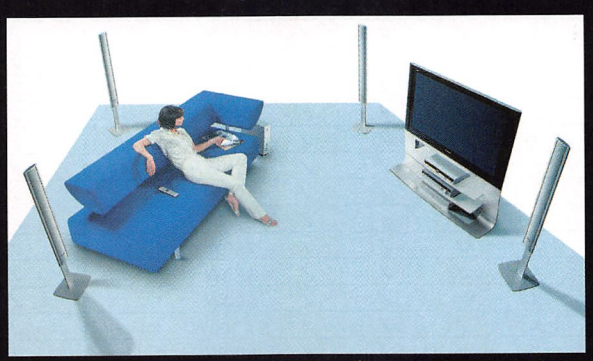
DVD-RAM allows features like Time Slip (simultaneous recording and playback) plus versatile editing features. The drawback is that very few DVD-Video players can play DVD-RAM discs.

DVD+RW lacks the editing flexibility of DVD-RAM and DVD-RW but crucially, it's compatible with the vast majority of third-party DVD players.

DVD-RW is very similar to DVD+RW, but DVD-RW recordings can be made in two modes, Video and VR – the latter offering sophisticated features thanks to its non-linear nature. One such feature is playlist editing, where you can edit together specific scenes. The downside is that VR recordings can only be watched on a limited number of players.

Recordings made in Video mode will be compatible with most third-party DVD players, but cannot be edited.

If you want to commit a recording to disc for good use a write-once format. There are two kinds: DVD-R and DVD+R.



If you want to do away with discs altogether, buy a hard disk recorder. These encode video and store it on the internal hard disk. Hard disk/DVD recorder combis are the ideal option, letting you record to the hard disk, edit your video and then archive on DVD.Some hard-disk recorders also offer features like pause live TV thanks to their 'buffer' memories.

As usual, the right connections are essential. If you're planning on making recordings from RGB digiboxes, seek out a recorder with an RGB input. All recorders sport a selection of AV inputs (S-video, composite video, stereo audio) and some even boast DV inputs (i.Link) for archiving footage straight from a DV camcorder. Don't forget that DVD recorders also play DVDs, so make sure there are RGB and digital audio outputs for high-quality pictures and multichannel audio.

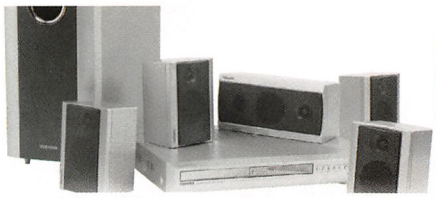
Most DVD and hard disk recorders offer several recording modes to trade off picture quality for recording time. Many recorders boast long maximum recording times, but these are usually in the lowest-quality setting. The common maximum recording time in the highest-quality video modes is around 1hr on a DVD. Of course, the huge capacities offered by hard-disk recorders mean that you can record for a lot longer in the highest quality.

DVD SYSTEMS

1 Denon DHT-550SD

£650 DVD home cinema system
● Reviewed: Issue 297

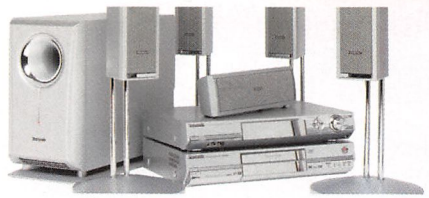
A superb 5.1 system with 100W per channel, progressive scan output and component video switching. The amp decodes all the major formats, including extended surround, should you feel like adding extra speakers. And it looks and sounds fantastic, too.



2 Toshiba SD-44HK

£215 DVD home cinema system
● Reviewed: Issue 294

Although not marvellous with music, this system from Toshiba provides an otherwise impeccable performance with DVDs and movie sound. Both high-quality sources and standard pictures are impressive, while the price tag is certainly not to be sniffed at.



3 Panasonic SC-HT37R

£1,000 HDD/DVD recorder home cinema system ● Reviewed: December 04

Featuring an HDD/DVD-RAM combi recorder, receiver and the SC-HTO7 surround speaker system, this system is capable of some very impressive results. The 80GB DVD deck is the true star, with its ability to store up to 142hr of TV, plus play and record on DVD-R/RAM discs.

DVD Systems

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	DVD-A PLAYBACK	SACD PLAYBACK	DOLBY DIGITAL	DOLBY PRO LOGIC II	DTS	POWER OUTPUT	No. OF SCARTS	RGB SCARTS	S-VIDEO	COMPONENT VIDEO OUT	PAL PROG SCAN	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Bush DVDAVR11XI	£TBA	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	325W	1	✗	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Bush DVDAVR12	£TBA	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	105W	1	✗	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Bush DVDAV14XX	£TBA	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	150W	1	✗	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Akai DVR4200SS	£170	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	150W	1	1	✓	✓	✓	n/a	
Eltax Nova DVD	£150	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	330W	1	1	✓	✗	✗	May-04	★★★★
Denon 770SD	£1,000	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	600W	1	1	✓	✓	✓	Jun-04	★★★★★
Denon ADV-M71	£500	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	2 x 25	1	1	✓	✗	✗	Feb-04	★★★★
Denon DHT-500SD	£500	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	600W	1	1	✓	✓	✓	Oct-04	★★★★★
Denon DHT-550SD	£650	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	600W	1	1	✓	✓	✓	297	★★★★★
Denon DHT-M330DV	£400	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	5 x 20W	1	1	✓	✓	✓	295	★★★★
Hitachi HTD-K185	£TBA	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	135W	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Jamo DVR 50	£500	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	250W	1	1	✓	✓	✓	n/a	
JBL DSC 500	£500	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	175W	1	1	✓		✗	n/a	
JVC EX-A1	£400	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	2 x 20	1	1	✓	✗	✗	Jul-04	★★★★★
JVC TH-S55	£250	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	810W	1	1	✗	✓	✓	297	★★★★
JVC TH-S66	£350	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	810W	1	1	✓	✓	✓	n/a	
JVC TH-SW8	£400	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	480W	1	1	✓	✓	✓	292	★★★★
JVC TH-SW9	£550	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	480W	1	1	✓	✓	✓	Dec-04	★★★★
KEF Instant Theatre	£1,200	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	2x NXT	1	1	✓	✓	✓	May-04	★★★★
Loewe Auro & Tremo	£1,750	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	250W	1	1	✓	✗	✗	Apr-04	★★★
Loewe Certos	£2,750	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓		1	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Marantz Hollywood TAKE 1	£1,000	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	250W	1	1	✓	✗	✓(ntsc)	n/a	
Marantz Hollywood TAKE 2	£700	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	560W	1	1	✓	✗	✓	293	★★★★
Mitsubishi LX3900SA	£249	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	300W	1	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Mustek R320A Plus	£240	✗	✗	✓			200W	1	1	✓	✗	✓	295	★★
Onkyo DR-L50	£400	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	105W	1	1	✓		✗	n/a	
Onkyo DR-S2.2	£900	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	175W	1	1	✓		✗	n/a	
Panasonic SC-HT520	£250	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	350W	1	1	✓	✓	✓(ntsc)	Aug-04	★★★★
Panasonic SC-HT870	£450	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	750W	1	1	✓	✓	✓(ntsc)	Oct-04	★★★★
Panasonic SC-HT1000	£850	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	460W	1	1	✓	✗	✗	Mar-04	★★★★
Panasonic SC-HT1500	£900	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	380W	2	2	✓	✗	✓	291	★★★★
Panasonic SC-PM39D	£250	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	2 x 35	1	1	✓	✗	✗	Nov-04	★★★★
Panasonic SC-DP1	£250	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	2 x 50	1	1	✓		✗	n/a	
Panasonic SC-HT37R	£1,000	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	460W	2	1	✓	✓	✓	Dec-04	★★★★★
Philips LX3900SA	£250	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	2 x 45	1	1	✗		✗	n/a	
Philips LX7000SA	£350	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	150W	1	1	✓		✗	n/a	
Philips LX7500R	£650	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	2 x 100	2	1	✓	✓	✓	292	★★★★
Philips MX5800SA	£500	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	375W	1	1	✓	✗	✗	Mar-04	★★★
Philips MX6000i	£550	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	375W	1	1	✓	✗	✗	290	★★★★
Philips LX9000R	£1,000	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	375W	1	1	✓	✗	✗	Feb-04	★★★★
Philips LX8300SA	£350	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	250W	1	1	✓		✓	n/a	
Pioneer DCS-222	£200	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	450W	1	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Pioneer DCS-323	£300	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	500W	1	1	✓	✗	✗	Sep-04	★★★★★
Pioneer DCS-333	£280	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	5 x 100W	1	1	✓	✗	✗	297	★★★★
Pioneer DCS-424	£370	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	600W	1	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	

REAR-PRO TVs

DVD Systems cont.

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	DVD-A PLAYBACK	SACD PLAYBACK	DOLBY DIGITAL	DOLBY PRO LOGIC II	DTS	POWER OUTPUT	No. OF SCARTS	RGB SCARTS	S-VIDEO	COMPONENT VIDEO OUT	PAL PROG SCAN	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Pioneer DCS-525	£400	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	600W	1	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Pioneer NS-DV990	£800	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	375W	1	1	✓	✓	✗	Feb-04	★★★★★
Pioneer RCS-9H	£800	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	500W	1	1	✓	✗	✗	291	★★★★
Samsung HT-EV100	£280	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	135W	1	0	✓	✗	✓	Jan-04	★★★
Samsung HT-DB300	£300	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	340W	1	0	✓	TBC	✓	n/a	
Samsung HT-DB750	£350	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	500W	1	0	✓	TBC	✓	n/a	
Samsung HT-DS400	£280	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	600W	1	1	✗	✓	✓	Jul-04	★★★★
Sanyo DC-TS780	£200	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	250W	1	1	✗	✓	✓	Sep-04	★★★
Sharp HT-X1H	£250	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	300W	1	1	✓	TBC	✗	n/a	
Sharp SD-PX15H	£400	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	175W	1	1	✓	✗	✗	291	★★★
Sony DAV-SA30	£350	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	220W	1	1	✗	TBC	✗	n/a	
Sony DAV-SC5	£450	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	450W	1	1	✗	✗	✗	Jan-04	★★★★
Sony DAV-SC6	£650	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	500W	1	1	✗	TBC	✗	n/a	
Sony DAV-SC8	£650	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	500W	1	1	✗	✗	✗	Mar-04	★★★★
Sony DAV-DS1000	£2,500	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	500W	1	1	✗	TBC	✗	n/a	
Sony DAV-SR4W	£400	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	2x114	1	1	✓	✗	✗	292	★★★★
Sony LX3900SA	£249	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	300W	1	1	✗	TBC	✗	n/a	
Tatung THT5125S	£200	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	125W	1	1	✓	✗	✗	Mar-04	★★★
Thomson DPL909VD	£200	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	150W	1	0	✓	✗	✗	Jan-04	★★★
Toshiba SD44HK	£215	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	300W	1	1	✓	✓	✓	294	★★★★★
Toshiba SD-63HK	£500	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	300W	1	1	✓	✓	✗	Oct-04	★★★★
Vieta VDR-3000	£600	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	150W	1	1	✓	✗	✗	Feb-04	★★★★★
Yamaha DVX-S200	£449	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	5x100W	1	1	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Yamaha DVX-S120	£349	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	5x55W	1	1	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Yamaha DVX-S60	£600	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	150W	2	1	✓	TBC	✗	n/a	

Rear-projection TVs

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	TYPE	SCREEN SIZE	TUNER TYPE	SOUND SYSTEM	50Hz/100Hz	HI-DEF READY	No. OF SCARTS	RGB SCARTS	HDMI/DVMI	S-VIDEO IN	COMPONENT VIDEO INPUT	IMAGE PROCESSING	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Bush RP43TV	£TBA		43in	Analogue	NICAM	100Hz	✓	3	1	✗/✗	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Bush RP51TV	£TBA		51in	Analogue	NICAM	100Hz	✓	3	1	✗/✗	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Bush RP40TV	£700	CRT	40in	Multi	NICAM	100Hz	✗	3	1	✗/✗	✓	✗	✗	Jan 05	★★★
Loewe Articos 55 DLP	£4,750	DLP	55in	Analogue	Dolby Dig (opt)	100Hz	✓	3	2	✓/✓	✓	✓	✗	Apr-04	★★★★★
Optoma RD50	£1,995	DLP	50in	Analogue	NICAM	n/a	✗	3	2	✓/✓	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Optoma RD65	£3,995	DLP	65in	Analogue	NICAM	n/a	✗	3	2	✓/✓	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Sagem Axium	£2,995	DLP	50in	Analogue	NICAM	✗/✗	✓	3	2	✗/✓	✓	✓	DLP	Jun-04	★★★★★
Sagem HD-D45	£2,300	DLP	45in	Analogue	NICAM	n/a	✓	3	2	✗/✓	✓	✓	Faroudja	294	★★★★★
Sagem HD-D45S	£1,900	DLP	45in	Analogue	NICAM	n/a	✓	3	3	✗/✓	✓	✓	Faroudja	298	★★★★★
Sagem HD-D56B	£2,700	DLP	56in	Digital/ PAL	NICAM	n/a	✓	3	2	✗/✓	✓	✓	Faroudja	299	★★★★★
Samsung SP50L7HX	£3,000	DLP	50in	Multi	NICAM	✗/✗	✓	3	2	✓/✗	✓	✓	DNIe	Jan 05	★★★★★
Sim2 Domino 45TV	£4,000	DLP	45in	Hyperband	NICAM	n/a	✓	2	1	✗/✗	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Sim2 Domino 55M	£6,000	DLP	55in	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	n/a	n/a	✓/✗	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Sim2 RTX 45	£6,000	DLP	45in	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	n/a	n/a	✗/✗	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Sim2 RTX 55TV	£6,000	DLP	55in	Hyperband	NICAM	2	✓	2	1	✗/✗	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Sim2 RTX 55H	£6,000	DLP	55in	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	n/a	n/a	✓/✗	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Sony KP-44PX3U	£1,400	CRT	44in	PAL/N	NICAM	100Hz	✗	3	2	✗/✗	✓	✓	ADM	Oct-04	★★★★
Sony KF-42SX300	£2,000	LCD	42in	PAL/N	NICAM	✗/✗	✗	3	2	✗/✗	✓	✓	DCI	Jun-04	★★★★
Sony KF-50SX300	£4,000		50in	PAL/N	NICAM	n/a		3	2		✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Thomson 50DSZ645	£3,000	DLP	61in	Pan-euro	Virtual Dolby	✗/✗	✓	3	2	✗/✓	✓	✓	Hi-Pix	294	★★★★★
Thomson 61DSZ644	£6,000	DLP	61in	Pan-euro	Virtual Dolby	✗/✗	✓	3	1	✗/✓	✓	✓	Hi-Pix	291	★★★
Thomson 61JW643S	£2,500	CRT	61in	Pan-euro	Virtual Dolby	100Hz		3	2	✗/✗	✓	✓	Hi-Pix	Jun-04	★★★
Thomson 44JW643S	£1,300	CRT	44in	Pan-euro	Virtual Dolby	100Hz		3	2		✓	✓	Hi-Pix	n/a	

CRT TVs

28in Analogue Widescreen TVs

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	SOUND SYSTEM	50Hz/100Hz	TUNER TYPE	No. OF SCARTS	RGB SCARTS	S-VIDEO IN	COMPONENT VIDEO INPUT	IMAGE PROCESSING	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Goodmans K28W05	£240	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✗	✗	✗	Apr-04	★★★★★
Hitachi C2844S	£230	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✗	✗	✗	Oct-04	★★★
Hitachi C28WF460N	£TBA	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Hitachi C28WF560N	£TBA	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
JVC AV-28R57	£450	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✗	✗	298	★★★
JVC AV-28TS	£400	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
JVC AV-28GT1SJF	£300	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	3	1	✗	✗	✗	Apr-04	★★★
JVC AV-28GT1EKS	£400	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	3	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
JVC AV-28X4SKA	£600	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✗	✗	Aug-04	★★★★★
Loewe Mimo 28	£899	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Loewe Vitros 6370 ZW	£899	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Loewe Aventos 3970 ZW	£825	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Loewe Xelos 5270 ZW	£850	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Loewe Nemos 28	£800	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Loewe Cantus 3870 ZW	£699	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Panasonic TX-28PS12	£600	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Panasonic TX-28PS5	£600	DD	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Panasonic TX-28PM1	£500	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	Oct-04	★★★★
Panasonic TX-28PS1	£500	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Philips 28PW9509	£900	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	3	2	✓	✗	PP2	n/a	
Philips 28PW9309	£800	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	3	1	✓	✗	PP	n/a	
Philips 28PW6006c	£450	NICAM	50Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Philips 28PW6517c	£500	NICAM	50Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Philips 28PW6518	£400	NICAM	50Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	✗	292	★★★★★
Philips 28PW6618	£500	NICAM	50Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Philips 28PW8608	£600	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	✗	Apr-04	★★★★★
Philips 28PW8719	£380	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	✗	296	★★★★
Philips 28PW9308c	£800	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	Pixel Plus	n/a	
Philips 28PW9309	£800	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	3	1	✓	✗	n/a	n/a	
Philips 28PW9509	£900	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	3	2	✓	✗	n/a	n/a	
Philips 28PW9618c	£1,200	DD	100Hz	Multi	4	2	✓	✗	Pixel Plus	n/a	
Samsung WS28M064	£400	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	Oct-04	★★★
Samsung WS28Z46V	£700	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	2	0	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Samsung WS28M64V	£530	NICAM	50Hz	PAL/NTSC	2	0	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Samsung WS28V53N	£380	NICAM	50Hz	PAL/NTSC	2	0	✗	✗	✗	n/a	
Sanyo CE-28WP5	£400	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	2	✗	✓	✗	n/a	
Sanyo CE-28WN6	£400	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	2	✗	✗	✗	n/a	
Sharp 28LF-92H	£330	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	Jul-04	★★★
Sharp 28LW-92H	£310	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✗	✗	✗	n/a	
Sharp 32LF-92H	£550	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Sharp 32-LW92H	£440	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✗	✗	✗	n/a	
Sony KD-28DX51U	£550	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	301	★★★★
Sony KV-28HX15U	£400	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	292	★★★★
Sony KV-28LS36	£500	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	Apr-04	★★★★
Sony KV-28FQ70	£900	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Sony KV-28FX68	£700	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Sony KV-28CS70U	£650	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✗	✗	291	★★★★
Tatung T28WF255S	£370	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Tatung T28WT91S	£290	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Tatung T28F01S	£310	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Thomson 28WR23UG	£TBA	NICAM	50Hz	pan-euro	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Thomson 28WH403S	£TBA	NICAM	100Hz	pan-euro	2	1	✓	✗	High Focus	n/a	
Thomson 32WM101	£350	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	297	★★★★
Toshiba 28W33	£300	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✗	✗	✗	n/a	
Toshiba 28ZH36	£600	NICAM	100Hz	MULTI	2	1	✗	✗	✗	n/a	
Toshiba 28Z33	£600	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✗	✗	✗	n/a	
Toshiba 28Z44	£430	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✗	✗	✗	293	★★★★
Toshiba 28Z47	£450	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✗	✗	✗	Nov-04	★★★★
Toshiba 28ZH46	£899	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	2	1	✗	✗	✗	n/a	
Toshiba 28Z46	£320	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✗	✗	✗	n/a	

1 Toshiba 32YT56B

£600 32in IDTV
● Reviewed: Issue 299

It may be on the chunky side, but this heavyweight is a good all-round performer when it comes to the basics. It generates more texture and sharpness than you might expect from a budget model and the sound range is nice and wide too.

2 Philips 32PW9309

£800 32in IDTV
● Reviewed: Issue 291

Much of the success of this TV is down to Philips' excellent Pixel Plus 2 processing, which squeezes maximum colour, detail and contrast out of pictures. A dream come true for those that want high-end picture technology at a midrange price.

3 Philips 28DW6559

£500 28in IDTV
● Reviewed: Issue 293

Philips has conjured up yet another seriously persuasive reason to go digital with this eye catching set. The combination of nicely presented digital functionality with all-round performance at an affordable price, will leave most rivals green with envy.

32/36in Analogue Widescreen TVs

Key: PP=Pixel Plus

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	SOUND SYSTEM	50Hz/100Hz	TUNER TYPE	No. OF SCARTS	RGB SCARTS	S-VIDEO IN	COMPONENT VIDEO INPUT	IMAGE PROCESSING	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Bush RF7686VPL	£TBA	NICAM		PAL	2	2			✗	n/a	
Bush RF76694D	£TBA	NICAM		PAL	2	2	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Bush WS7641SIL	£TBA	NICAM		PAL	2	2			✗	n/a	
Hitachi C32WF560N	£TBA	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Hitachi C32W460N	£TBA	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
JVC AV-32T25EKS	£750	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	3	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
JVC AV-32R47SK	£800	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	3	2	✗	✗	✗	Jul-04	★★★★
JVC AV-32R57SK	£400	DD	50Hz	PAL	3	2	✗	✗	✗	299	★★★★
JVC AV-32X37HKE	£950	NICAM	100HZ	PAL	3	2	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
JVC AV32P37	£1100	NICAM	75Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✓	DIST	Jan-04	★★★★
LG Lafinion 82W	£900	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	3	1	✗	✗	✗	Aug-04	★★★★
Loewe Aconda 9381	£1,500	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Loewe Aconda 9381 DR+	£1,900	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Loewe Aconda 9281 ZW	£1,400	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	3	2	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Loewe Articos 32HD/DR+	£2,300	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Loewe Aventos 3981	£800	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	Aug-04	★★★★
Loewe Aventos 3981DR+	£1,100	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Loewe Nemos 32 DR+	£1,300	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Loewe Nemos 32	£1,000	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	3	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Loewe Vitros 6381 ZW	£1,300	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	3	2	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Loewe Xelos 5381 ZW	£1,100	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	3	2	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Loewe Nemos 32	£1,200	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	3	2	✓	✓	DMC/DMI	Feb-04	★★★★★
Panasonic TX-32PM2	£550	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	299	★★
Panasonic TX-32PS1	£800	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Panasonic TX-36PL32	£1,150	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✓	Acuity	Jun-04	★★★★★
Philips 32DW6559	£750	NICAM	50Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗		n/a	
Philips 32PW6517	£700	NICAM	50Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	✗	Apr-04	★★★★★
Philips 32PW6518	£650	NICAM	50Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Philips 32PW6618	£700	NICAM	50Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Philips 32PW8608c	£900	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Philips 32PW8729	£800	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗		n/a	
Philips 32PW9309	£800	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	PP	291	★★★★★
Philips 32PW9509	£1,099	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	3	2	✓	✗	PP2	Sep-04	★★★★★
Philips 32PW9586	£1,500	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	3	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Philips 32PW9768/05	£1,700	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	4	2	✓	✗	PP	Mar-04	★★★★★
Philips 36PW8719	£1,300	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Philips 32PW9309	£1,800	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	2	1	✓	✗	PP2	291	★★★★★
Samsung WS32Z108R	£1700	DD/DTS/DPII	100Hz	PAL/N	3	2	✓	✓	DNIe	n/a	
Samsung WS32Z078R	£1400	DD	100Hz	PAL/N	3	2	✓	✓	DNIe	n/a	
Samsung WS32Z306VB	£500	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	299	★★★
Samsung WS32V54V	£570	NICAM	50Hz	PAL/N	2	0	✓	✗	✗	n/a	

TVs

32/36in Analogue Widescreen TVs Continued...

Key: PP=PixelPlus

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	SOUND SYSTEM	50Hz/100Hz	TUNER TYPE	No. OF SCARTS	RGB SCARTS	S-VIDEO IN	COMPONENT VIDEO INPUT	IMAGE PROCESSING	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Sanyo CE-32FWN4	£650	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	2	✗	✓	✗	n/a	
Sanyo CE-32WN6	£600	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	2	✗	✓	✗	n/a	
Sony KV-32LS36	£850	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Sony KV-36HQ100B	£2,000	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	4	2	✓	✗	Picture	Jun-04	★★★★★
Tatung T32WF255S	£570	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	n/a	
Thomson 32WB843	£1,200	NICAM	100Hz	pan-euro	3	2	✓	✓	Hi-Pix	Apr-04	★★★★
Thomson 32WM403	£600	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	High Focus	Nov-04	★★★★
Toshiba 32ZH46	£899	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	2	1	✗	✗	✗	n/a	
Toshiba 32W33	£500	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✗	✗	✗	n/a	
Toshiba 32Z46	£430	NICAM	50Hz	Multi	2	1	✗	✗	✗	n/a	
Toshiba 32ZH46	£800	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	2	1	✗	✗	✗	Dec-04	★★★★
Toshiba 36ZD26	£1,800	NICAM	100Hz	Multi	3	1	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
Toshiba 36ZP48	£1,500	DOLBY DIG	100Hz	Multi	3	2	✓	✓	✗	OCT-04	★★★★★

Integrated Digital TVs (all screen sizes)

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	DIGITAL TV SERVICE	SCREEN SIZE	SOUND SYSTEM	50Hz/100Hz	TUNER TYPE	No. OF SCARTS	RGB SCARTS	S-VIDEO IN	COMPONENT VIDEO INPUT	IMAGE PROCESSING	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
JVC HV-28D40	£700	Freeview	28in	NICAM	75Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✓	✗	n/a	
JVC AV-32EX5BK	£750	Freeview	32in	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	2	n/a	✓	✗	DigiPure	299	★★★★
JVC HV-32D40BK	£800	Freeview	32in	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✓	✗	296	★★★★
Panasonic TX-32DT40	£1,100	Freeview	32in	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✗	✗	Mar-04	★★★★★
Panasonic TX-32DTM1	£600	Freeview	32in	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✗	✗	n/a	299	★★★★
Panasonic TX-28DTM1	£500	Freeview	28in	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	✗	✗	✗	✗	297	★★★★
Panasonic TX-28DTX1	£550	Freeview	28in	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	Jan 05	★★★★
Panasonic TX-28DTX10	£690	Freeview	28in	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	Sep-04	★★★★
Philips 28DW6559	£500	Freeview	28in	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	293	
Philips 32DW6558/05	£800	Freeview	32in	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	Jul-04	★★★★
Roadstar CTV1042D	£200	Freeview	10in	Mono		Multi	1	1	✗	✗	✗	301	★★★★
Samsung WS32A116DSX	£750	Freeview	32in	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	Sep-04	★★★
Sanyo CE-28DFN2	£600	Freeview	28in	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✗	✗	✗	Feb-04	★★★
Sony KD-28DL10U	£600	Freeview	28in	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	Jan-04	★★★★★
Sony KD-28DL11U	£550	Freeview	28in	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✗	✗	✗	Jan-05	★★★★
Sony KD-32DC11U	£700	Freeview	32in	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✗	✗	✗	299	★★★★
Sony KD-32DX50	£900	Freeview	32in	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	Mar-04	★★★★
Sony KD-32DX200U	£1200	Freeview	32in	NICAM	100Hz	PAL	3	2	✓	✗	✗	May-04	★★★★★
Toshiba 32YT56B	£600	Freeview	32in	NICAM	50Hz	PAL	2	1	✓	✗	✗	299	★★★★★

What is HD Ready ?

When you see the HD Ready logo, it means that the TV or projector to which it refers is guaranteed to be compatible with high-definition broadcasts.

The logo – developed by EICTA, the body that represents Europe's consumer electronics industries – means that the TV or projector conforms to a handful of basic, but inflexible specifications. The first of these is panel resolution: it must have a native resolution of at least 720 lines. The other main criterion concerns sockets (see box for a complete run-down of the new HD requirements) – a high-def set must bear component input plus DVI (Digital Visual Interface) or HDMI (High Definition Multimedia Interface) sockets in order to qualify. And the DVI port must be compliant with High-bandwidth Digital Content Protection (HDCP), an internationally agreed standard that sets up a dialogue between connected equipment to establish whether the TV is allowed to have the signal from the transmitting device. This dialogue is controlled by broadcasters, and is a way of preventing people making copies of TV shows. All HDMI ports support this.

HD ready

That HD ready badge guarantees...

- A minimum native resolution of the display or display engine (in the case of DLP projectors, for example) is 720 lines in wide aspect ratio
- That the display will accept HD signals via component video (YPbPr) and DVI or HDMI
- HD-capable inputs that will accept the following video formats: a) 1,280 x 720p and b) 1,920 x 1,080i (at 50 and 60Hz)
- A DVI or HDMI input with HDCP copy protection support

PLASMA

1 Pioneer PDP-436XDE

£2,800 43in plasma IDTV
● Reviewed: Issue 301

Its frame may be lightweight, but a heavy-weight feature list and technological picture improvements make this sixth-generation plasma one very big-hitter indeed. Our review described its pictures as 'seriously close' to perfect, and overall as 'simply awesome'.

2 Panasonic TH-37PV500

£2,500 37in plasma IDTV
● Reviewed: Issue 296

Just one look at this HD Ready hunk of beauty and we were smitten, but just wait 'til you turn it on! Our review said: 'Pictures are quite possibly the best and most consistent we've seen on any plasma. Ever'. And that says it all – except that it's also packed with features.

3 Hitachi 42PD7500

£2,700 42in plasma IDTV
● Reviewed: Issue 299

Hitachi has pulled some pretty awesome tricks when it comes to value for money, but this is its best yet. This fully HD-compliant plasma not only has more sockets than you'll ever need, but also boasts a digital tuner and performs like a set costing twice as much.

Plasma TVs

Key: PM=Picture Master PP=Pixel Plus

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	SCREEN SIZE	SCREEN SHAPE	TUNER TYPE	SPEAKERS INCLUDED	RESOLUTION (PIXELS)	HI-DEF READY?	CONTRAST RATIO	BRIGHTNESS	No. OF SCARTS	RGB SCARTS	S-VIDEO IN	COMPONENT VIDEO INPUT	HDMI/DVI INPUT	PICTURE PROCESSING	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Fujitsu P42HHS30ES	£5,400	42in	16:9	No tuner	✗	1024x1024	✓	1500:1	n/a	3	2	✓	✓	✗/✓	AVM	Jun-04	★★★★★
Fujitsu P42VHHA40	£3,600	42in	16:9	No tuner	✗	1024x1024	✓	1000:1	1000:1	0	0	✓	✓	✓/✓	AVM II	296	★★★★
Fujitsu P42VHA30ES	£3,000	42in	16:9	No tuner	✗	852x480	✗	1500:1	n/a	1	1	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗	Sep-04	★★★★★
Fujitsu P63XHA30E	£12,500	63in	16:9	No tuner	✗	1366x768	✗	3000:1	1000cd/m2	1	1	✗	✓	✗/✗	AVM	Nov-04	★★★★
Goodmans GTV42P2	£1,800	42in	16:9	PAL	✓	852x480	✗	1000:1	n/a	4		✓	✗	✗/✓	✗	Dec-04	★★
HiSense PDP4211EU	£1,300	42in	16:9	PAL	✗	852x480	✗	3000:1	1000cd/m2	2	1	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗	292	★★★
Hitachi 32PD5300	£2,400	32in	16:9	No tuner	✓	1024x852	✗	1000:1	1000cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗	Aug-04	★★★★★
Hitachi 42PD5200	£3,000	42in	16:9	Analogue	✓	1024x1024	✗	1000:1	1100cd/m2	1	1	✓	✓	✗/✓	Advanced	Jun-04	★★★★★
Hitachi 42PD7200	£2,500	42in	16:9	Analogue	✓	1024x1024	✓	1000:1	1200cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓	✓/✓	PM	294	★★★★★
Hitachi 42PD7500	£2,700	42in	16:9	An/digital	✓	1024x1024	✓	1000:1	1200cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓	✓/✓	PM	299	★★★★★
Hitachi 55PMA550	£6,000	55in	16:9	No tuner	✓	1366x768	✓	900:1	1000cd/m2	1	1	✓	✓	✗/✓	✗	Nov-04	★★★★★
Hyundai HPT-4240	£2,000	42in	16:9	PAL	✓	852X480	✗	1200:1	1000cd/m2	1	1	✓	✓		✗	Jun-04	★★★
JVC PD-42B50	£3,000	42in	16:9	Analogue	✓	852x480	✗	3000:1	430cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓	✗/✗	DIST	Dec-04	★★★★
JVC PD-42V31E	£3,500	42in	16:9	PAL	✓	1024x768	✗	3000:1	400cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓	✗/✗	DIST	Jun-04	★★★
Loewe Spheros 42HD/DR+	£5,999	42in	16:9	Analogue	✓	1024x1024	✓	1000:1	1000cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓	✓/✓	✗	n/a	
Loewe Xelos A42	£3,400	42in	16:9	Analogue	✓	1024x1024	✓	1000:1	1100cd/m2	2	1	✓	✓	✓/✗	✗	298	★★★
LG MZ-42PZ44	£2,200	42in	16:9	Analogue	✓	852x480	✗	1000:1	1000cd/m2	2	1	✓	✓	✗/✓	✗	Jul-04	★★★
LG RZ-42PX11	£2,500	42in	16:9	Analogue	✓	852x480	✗	n/a	1000cd/m2	3	1	✓	✓	✗/✓	✗	Dec-04	★★★
LG RZ-42PY10X	£2,500	42in	16:9	Analogue	✓	1366x768	✓	3000:1	1000cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓	✗/✓	XD Engine	298	★★★★
Marantz PD4220V	£3,500	42in	16:9	No tuner	✗	852x480	✓	450:1	440cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓	✗/✓	DCTI+DLTI	n/a	
NEC 42XM2	£4,700	42in	16:9	No tuner	✓	1024X768	✓	3000:1	545cd/m2	0	0	✓	✓	✗/✓	✗	Jul-04	★★★
NEC 61XM2	£11,000	61in	16:9	No tuner	✗	1365x768	✓			0	0	✓	✓	✗/✓	✗	Nov-04	★★★
Panasonic TH-37PV500	£2,500	37in	16:9	An/digital	✓	1024x720	✓	3000:1	600cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓	✓/✗	✗	296	★★★★★
Panasonic TH-42PE30B	£3,700	42in	16:9	Digital	✓	852x480	✗	4000:1	800cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗	Aug-04	★★★★★
Philips 42PF5520D	£1,500	42in	16:9	An/digital	✓	852x480	✗	3000:1	1000cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	301	★★★
Philips 42PF9946	£1,900	42in	16:9	Analogue	✓	852x480	✗	3000:1	1000cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	292	★★★★
Philips 42PF9966	£4,500	42in	16:9	Analogue	✓	1024x1024	✓	1000:1	1000cd/m2	3	2	✗	✗	✗/✓	PP2	Dec-04	★★★★
Pioneer PDP-435FDE	£4,500	43in	16:9	Digital	✓	1024x768	✓	1100:1	1100cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓	✓/✗	P/Drive	Nov-04	★★★★
Pioneer PDP-435XDE	£4,500	43in	16:9	Analogue	✓	1024x768	✓	1100:1	1000cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓	✓/✗	P/Drive	Nov-04	★★★★
Pioneer PDP-436XDE	£2,800	43in	16:9	An/digital	✓	1024x768	✓	3000:1	1100cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓	✓/✗	P/Drive II	301	★★★★★
Samsung PS50P3HX	£6,000	50in	16:9	Analogue	✓	1024x768	✓	1000:1	800cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗	✗/✓	✗	Jul-04	★★★★
Samsung PS42P4	£3,800	42in	16:9	Analogue	✓	1024x1024	✓	1000:1	1,100cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓	✗/✓	✗	290	★★★★
Samsung PS42V4SKX	£1,600	42in	16:9	Analogue	✓	852x480	✗	3000:1	1,000cd/m2	2	1	✓	✓	✗/✓	✗	298	★★★
Sony KDE-42MRX1	£6,300	42in	16:9	Digital	✓	1024x768	✗	n/a	n/a	3	2	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗	Jan 05	★★★★
Sony KE-P42M1	£2,400	42in	16:9	Analogue	✓	852x480	✗	n/a	n/a	3	2	✓	✓	✗/✗	WEGA	298	★★★
Thomson 32PB220S4	£1,500	37in	16:9	Analogue	✓	1024x1024	✓	1000:1	1100cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓	✗/✓	HI-PIX	296	★★★
Thomson 42WM03ST	£3,000	42in	16:9	Analogue	✓	1280x1024	✓	1000:1	1000cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	May-04	★★★★
Thomson 50WB03PU	£5,000	50in	16:9	multi				750:1	850cd/m2	3	2		✓		✗	n/a	
Tiny Focus 4200	£1,295	42in	16:9	PAL	✗	852x480	✗	3000:1	n/a	2	2	✗	✓	✗/✗	✗	292	★★★★
Toshiba 42WP46	£2,800	42in	16:9	Multi		852x480	✗	3000:1	1000cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓	✗/✗	✗	n/a	
Yamaha PDM-4210	£4,000	42in	16:9	PAL	✗	1024x1024	✓	3000:1	1100cd/m2	2	2	✓	✓	✓/✓	Alis	Sep-04	★★★★

LCD TVs

1 Sony KDL-V32A12U

£1,500 32in widescreen LCD IDTV
● Reviewed: Issue 300

Despite a slow start, Sony has clawed its way to the top of the LCD tree with a truly outstanding TV at an unbelieveable price. Future-proofed thanks to an integrated digital tuner and HDMI input, it delivers impressively natural pictures as well as serving up very precise audio.

2 Toshiba 32WLT58

£1,400 32in widescreen LCD IDTV
● Reviewed: Issue 301

Toshiba continues to set the cat among the LCD pigeons by including two (count 'em!) HDMI sockets, enough connections to keep all of your other AV kit happy and a level of picture quality that wouldn't look out of place on something far more expensive than this little belter.

3 Panasonic TX-32LXD500

£2,000 32in widescreen LCD IDTV
● Reviewed: Issue 296

Among the UK's ultimate LCD TVs by virtue of its HD Ready status, integrated digital tuner and breathtaking picture quality. Connections include an HDMI input, and three Scarts (2 RGB). Top this off with the frame's stunning matt black finish and you've got one superb TV.

LCD TVs

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	SCREEN SIZE	SCREEN SHAPE	SOUND SYSTEM	RESOLUTION (PIXELS)	HI-DEF READY?	CONTRAST RATIO	BRIGHTNESS	No. OF SCARTS	RGB SCARTS	S-VIDEO IN	HDMI/DVI INPUT	COMPONENT VIDEO INPUT	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Akai LM-H30CJSA	£800	30in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	500:1	500cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✓	295	★★★★★
AOC TV20542E	£400	20in	4:3	NICAM	800x600	✗	500:1	500cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	295	★★★★
Bush LCD14DVD	£500	14in	4:3	NICAM	1024x768	✗	350:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	290	★★★★
Bush LCD15IDTV	£500	15in	4:3	NICAM	1024x768	✗	300:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	Jan 05	★★★★
Bush LCD15TV	£500	15in	4:3	NICAM	1024x768	✗	350:1	400cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	Sep-04	★★★★
DMTech DML-3117WD	£600	17in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	Oct-04	★★★★
DMTech DML-4117W	£350	17in	16:9	NICAM	1024x678	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	293	★★★★
DMTech DML-4120SD	£500	20in	4:3	NICAM	800x600	✗	500:1	500cd/m2	1	0	✓	✗/✗	✗	295	★★★
DMTech DML-412WD	£750	26in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	500:1	450cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✗	✓	296	★★★★
DMTech DML-4132WDT	£1,150	32in	16:9	NICAM	1024x768	✓	600:1	500cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✓	✓	301	★★★
DMTech DML-4132WLD	£1,100	32in	16:9	NICAM	1024x768	✓	600:1	500cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✓	✓	300	★★★
Goodmans LD1501	£350	15in	4:3	NICAM	1024x768	✗	350:1	400cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	Sep-04	★★★★
Goodmans LD1701	£250	17in	4:3	NICAM	1280x1024	✗	450:1	300cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	297	★★★★
Goodmans LD2001	£400	20in	4:3	NICAM	800x600	✗	500:1	500cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	293	★★★
Goodmans LD2601	£700	26in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	600:1	600cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✓	✓	292	★★★
Hitachi 26LD6200	£700	26in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	500:1	450cd/m2	2	2	✓	✗/✓	✗	297	★★★★★
Hitachi 28LD5200E	£1,900	28in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✓	500:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✓	✓	Oct-04	★★★★
Hitachi 32LD7200	£1,500	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	600:1	500cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓/✓	✓	296	★★★★★
Humax LB-17E	£650	17in	16:9	NICAM	1024x768	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	Jul-04	★★★★
Humax LGB-26DTT	£1,000	26in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✓	800:1	450cd/m2	3	2	✓	✗/✓	✓	295	★★★
Humax LGB-32TPVR	£1,600	32in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✓	1,000:1	450cd/m2	3	2	✓	✗/✓	✓	294	★★★★
JVC LT-17C50BJ	£600	17in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	2	2	✓	✗/✗	✓	291	★★★★
JVC LT-17D50	£700	17in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	2	2	✓	✗/✗	✓	291	★★★★
JVC LT-17E31	£600	17in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	2	2	✓	✗/✗	✓	Sep-04	★★★★★
JVC LT-20B60SJ	£450	20in	4:3	NICAM	800x600	✗	500:1	500cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	300	★★★
JVC LT-23D50	£1,000	23in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	2	2	✓	✗/✗	✓	298	★★★★
JVC LT-26D50	£1,700	26in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✗	800:1	500cd/m2	2	2	✓	✗/✗	✓	292	★★★★
JVC LT-32C31BJE	£3,000	32in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✓	1000:1	500cd/m2	2	2	✓	✗/✗	✓	Aug-04	★★★★
JVC LT-32DS6	£2,000	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✗	500:1	470cd/m2	2	2	✓	✓/✗	✓	297	★★★★★
LG KZ-17LZ21	£900	17in	4:3	NICAM	1280x768	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	Jun-04	★★★★
LG RZ-14LA60	£300	14in	4:3	NICAM	640x480	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	293	★★★★
LG RZ-15LA66	£250	15in	4:3	NICAM	1024x768	✗	500:1	400cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	299	★★★
LG RZ-20LA70	£450	20in	4:3	NICAM	640x480	✗	350:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	295	★★★★
LG RZ-23LZ20	£1,300	23in	16:9	NICAM	1024x768	✗	450:1	400cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	Sep-04	★★★★★
LG-RZ32LP1	£1,600	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	1200:1	500cd/m2	2	1	✗	✓/✓	✓	301	★★★★
LG-RZ32LZ50	£1,500	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✗	500:1	n/a	2	1	✓	✗/✓	✓	292	★★★
Loewe Concept L32	£1,800	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	800:1	450cd/m2	2	1	✓	✓/✓	✓	299	★★★★
Loewe Spheros R37	£5,800	37in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	800:1	450cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✓	✓	294	★★★★★
Loewe Spheros 32HD/DR+	£3,100	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	800:1	450cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✓	✓	Dec 04	★★★★★
Loewe Xelos A26	£1,500	26in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	800:1	450cd/m2	2	1	✓	✓/✗	✓	300	★★★★
Loewe Xelos SL 20	£1,200	20in	4:3	NICAM	1280x768	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	May-04	★★★★

LCD TVs Continued...

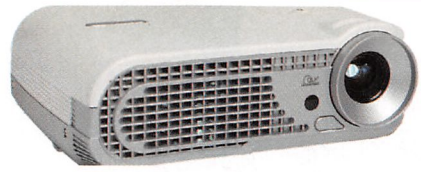
MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	SCREEN SIZE	SCREEN SHAPE	SOUND SYSTEM	RESOLUTION (PIXELS)	HI-DEF READY?	CONTRAST RATIO	BRIGHTNESS	No. OF SCARTS	RGB SCARTS	S-VIDEO IN	HDMI/DVI INPUT	COMPONENT VIDEO INPUT	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Loewe Xelos SL32HD/DR+	£2,600	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	800:1	450cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✓	✓	Dec-04	★★★★★
Panasonic TX-17LA1	£800	17in	4:3	NICAM	640x480	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	May-04	★★★★
Panasonic TX-32LXD1	£3,000	32in	15:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	500:1	450cd/m2	3	2	✓	✗/✗	✓	Sep-04	★★★★
Panasonic TX-32LXD50	£3,000	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✗	800:1	500cd/m2	3	2	✓	✗/✗	✓	299	★★★★
Panasonic TX-32LXD500	£2,000	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	800:1	500cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓/✗	✓	296	★★★★★
Philips 14PF6826	£300	14in	4:3	NICAM	640x480	✗	460:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	293	★★★★
Philips 15PF8946	£350	15in	4:3	NICAM	1024x768	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	297	★★★★
Philips 20PF8846	£500	20in	4:3	NICAM	640x480	✗	350:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	295	★★★★
Philips 23PF9945	£1,400	23in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	May-04	★★★★
Philips 26PF5520D	£900	26in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	600:1	450cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✓	✗	298	★★★★
Philips 26PF8946	£800	26in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	500:1	450cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✓	✗	296	★★★★★
Philips 26PF9946	£1,500	26in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✓	✗	290	★★★★★
Philips 30PF9946	£2,000	30in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	350:1	500cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	Dec-04	★★★★
Philips 37PF9986	£4,000	37in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	500:1	400cd/m2	3	2	✓	✗/✓	✗	Oct-04	★★★★★
Philips 32PF7520D	£1,300	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	600:1	500cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✓	✗	300	★★★★
Philips 32PF9830	£2,300	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	6,000:1	6000cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓/✓	✓	301	★★★★
Philips 32PF9986	£3,000	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	800:1	450cd/m2	3	2	✓	✗/✓	✗	Sep 04	★★★★★
Philips 42PF9986	£6,000	42in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	500:1	400cd/m2	3	2	✓	✗/✓	✗	291	★★★★★
Relisys RLT4000	£2,600	40in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✓	600:1	450cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✓	✓	300	★★★★
Sagem HD-L27	£1,000	27in	16:9	NICAM	1280x720	✓	600:1	550cd/m2	3	2	✓	✗/✓	✓	293	★★★★
Samsung LE15E31S	£250	15in	16:9	NICAM	1024x768	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	296	★★★★
Samsung LE-20S51B	£380	20in	4:3	NICAM	640x480	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	300	★★★★
Samsung LE32A41B	£1,500	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	600:1	500cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✓	✗	295	★★★★
Samsung LE32R41BD	£1,200	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	600:1	500cd/m2	2	1	✓	✓/✗	✓	298	★★★★★
Samsung LW15M13C	£400	15in	4:3	NICAM	1024x768	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	Sep-04	★★★★
Samsung LW15E23CB	£400	15in	4:3	NICAM	1024x768	✗	400:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	Apl-04	★★★★★
Samsung LW40A23W	£6,000	40in	16:9	DD/DPLII	1280x768	✗	600:1	500cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✓	✓	Sep-04	★★★★
Samsung LW-32A33W	£1,600	32in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✓	n/a	n/a	2	1	✓	✓/✓	✓	292	★★★★
Sanyo CE17LC4W-B	£450	17in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	600:1	n/a	2	2	✗	✗/✗	✗	299	★★★
Sanyo CE27LC3	£1,100	27in	16:9	NICAM	1280x720	✗	600:1	500cd/m2	2	1	✗	✗/✗	✗	292	★★★
Sanyo CE30LD3	£2,000	30in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	n/a	n/a	2	2	✓	✗/✗	✗	Oct-04	★★★
Sharp LC-15L1E	£1,400	15in	4:3	NICAM	640x480	✗	500:1	430cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	Mar-04	★★★★
Sharp LC-15S1E	£600	15in	4:3	NICAM	640x480	✗	500:1	430cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	Sep-04	★★★★★
Sharp LC-20SH1E	£500	20in	4:3	NICAM	640x480	✗	500:1	430cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	295	★★★
Sharp LC-30AD1E	£3,600	30in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✗	700:1	430cd/m2	3	2	✓	✗/✗	✓	May-04	★★★★★
Sharp LC-32GD1E	£3,000	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	800:1	450cd/m2	3	2	✓	✗/✓	✓	Nov-04	★★★★
Sharp LC-32P50E	£1,300	32in	16:9	NICAM	960x540	✗	800:1	450cd/m2	2	2	✓	✓/✗	✓	300	★★★★
Sharp LC-37AD1E	£5,600	37in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✗	700:1	430cd/m2	3	2	✓	✗/✗	✓	Jul-04	★★★★★
Sharp LC-45GD1E	£6,500	45in	16:9	NICAM	1920x768	✓	800:1	450cd/m2	3	2	✓	✗/✓	✓	293	★★★★
Sharp LL-171ME	£590	17in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	600:1	400cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	Oct-04	★★★★
Sony KDL-L32MRX1	£4,300	32in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	n/a	450cd/m2	3	2	✓	✗/✗	✓	Sep-04	★★★★★
Sony KDL-V32A12U	£1,500	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	1000:1	480cd/m2	3	3	✓	✓/✗	✓	300	★★★★★
Sony KLV-L17HR3	£650	17in	16:9	NICAM	1268x768	✗	n/a	n/a	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	293	★★★★★
Sony KLV-L23M1/S5	£1,000	23in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✗	n/a	450cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✗	✓	296	★★★★★
Sony KLV-L27HR3	£1,300	27in	16:9	NICAM	1280x720	✗	n/a	n/a	2	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	294	★★★★
Sony KLV-L32M1	£1,900	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✗	n/a	450cd/m2	3	2	✓	✗/✗	✓	Feb-05	★★★★
Sony KLV-26HG2	£2,300	26in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	n/a	n/a	2	1	✓	✗/✗	✓	Aug-04	★★★★★
Sky SLCD1701	£800	17in	16:9	NICAM	1024x768	✗	450:1	400cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✗	291	★★★
Tatung TLT2601	£1,350	26in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✗	500:1	450cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✗	✓	Aug-04	★★★★
Techview TSL-15T	£500	15in	4:3	NICAM	1024x768	✗	300:1	450cd/m2	1	0	✓	✗/✗	✗	Jul-04	★★★
Thomson 20LCDM03B	£900	20in	4:3	NICAM	1024x768	✗	500:1	500cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✓	May-04	★★★★★
Thomson 27LCDB03B	£1,500	27in	16:9	NICAM	1024x768	✗	500:1	500cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✓	✓	Jun-04	★★★★★
Thomson 30LCDB03B	£2,300	30in	16:9	NICAM	n/a	✗	500:1	500cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✓	✓	Oct-04	★★★★
Thomson 32LB220B4U	£1,300	32in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✓	800:1	550cd/m2	3	2	✓	✗/✓	✓	295	★★★★★
Toshiba 17WL46B	£600	17in	4:3	NICAM	1280x768	✗	400;1	450cd/m2	2	2	✓	✗/✗	✓	Sep-04	★★★★
Toshiba 26WL46B	£2,000	26in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✗	600:1	500cd/m2	2	2	✗	✗/✗	✓	Sep-04	★★★★★
Toshiba 27WL56P	£850	27in	16:9	NICAM	1280x720	✓	900:1	500cd/m2	2	1	✗	✓/✗	✗	297	★★★★
Toshiba 32WL48P	£1,700	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	600:1	550cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓/✗	✓	290	★★★★★
Toshiba 32WL56P	£1,200	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	800:1	500cd/m2	2	1	✓	✓/✗	✗	300	★★★★★
Toshiba 32WLT58	£1,400	32in	16:9	NICAM	1366x768	✓	800:1	500cd/m2	3	2	✓	✓/✗	✓	301	★★★★★
ViewSonic N2010	£500	20in	4:3	NICAM	640x480	✗	500:1	450cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✓	291	★★★★
ViewSonic N2750W	£700	27in	16:9	NICAM	1280x720	✗	600:1	550cd/m2	1	1	✓	✗/✗	✓	297	★★★★
ViewSonic N3000W	£1,700	30in	16:9	NICAM	1024x768	✗	n/a	n/a	2	2	✗	✗/✓	✓	Nov-04	★★★★★
ViewSonic N3200W	£1,400	32in	16:9	NICAM	1280x768	✓	600:1	550cd/m2	2	1	✓	✗/✓	✓	293	★★★★

PROJECTORS

1 Marantz VP-12S4

£9,000 DLP projector
● Reviewed: Issue 301

It's pricey compared to its two competitors here, but that is justified by an ultra-high end video processing system, highly accomplished black levels, vibrant, natural-looking colours, immaculate fine detail processing, relatively noise-free images and superb ease of use.



2 ThemeScene H30A

£1,145 DLP projector
● Reviewed: Issue 292

A high-end projector at a budget price, black levels are great, depth of field is the best we've ever seen at this price, colours are fabulously vibrant and fine detail response is unbelievably good. In short, the high-end of the market is under serious threat from this budget beauty.

3 Toshiba TDP-MT700

£2,500 DLP projector
● Reviewed: Issue 296

With a reasonable £2,500 price tag, the MT700 is one of the cheapest truly HD Ready projectors around. Using the HD2+ DLP chipset, it delivers eye-catching pictures, endowed with superbly rendered colours, awesome levels of detail, impressive contrast and cinematic smoothness.

Projectors

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	TYPE	PANEL SHAPE	RESOLUTION (PIXELS)	HI-DEF COMPATIBLE	CONTRAST RATIO	BRIGHTNESS (ANSI LUMENS)	S-VIDEO IN	SCART IN	HDMI/DVI IN	COMPONENT VIDEO IN	PC IN	NTSC SUPPORT	WEIGHT Kg	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
BenQ PE5120	£650	DLP	16:9	854x480	✗	2000:1	1,100	✓	✗	✗/✓	✓	✗	✓	2.9	298	★★★★★
Digital Projection iVision SX	TBA	DLP	4:3	1280x1024		1000:1	3000	✓	✗		✓		✓	3.0	n/a	
Dreamvision Dreamweaver2	£4,500	DLP	16:9	1024x576	✗	1500:1	1100	✓	✗	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	n/a	Sep-04	★★★★★
Epson EMP-TW200	£1,760	LCD	16:9	1280x720	✗	800:1	1,300	✓	✗	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	5.3	Aug-04	★★★★
Epson EMP-TW500	£2,960	LCD	16:9	1280x720	✓	1200:1	1,000	✓	✗	✓/✗	✓	✓	✓	6.2	Jul-04	★★★★
Hewlett Packard EP-7122	£1,300	DLP	4:3	1024x768	✓	1600:1	1200	✓	✗	✗/✓	✓	✗	✓	5.7	298	★★★★
Hewlett Packard VP-6120	£1,700	DLP	4:3	1024x768		2000:1	2000	✓	✗		✓		✓	3.0	n/a	
Hitachi PJ-TX100	£1,000	LCD	16:9	800x600	✗	1200:1	1200	✓	✗	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	4.4	Oct-04	★★★★
Hitachi PJ-LC7	£TBA	LCD	4:3	800x600	✗	400:1	1500	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✓	✓	2.25	n/a	
InFocus LP250	£1,526	LCD	16:9	1024x768		400:1	1300	✓	✗		✓	✓	✓	2.6	n/a	
InFocus ScreenPlay 4805	£1,000	DLP	16:9	854x480	✗	2000:1	750	✓	✗	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	3.5	Nov 04	★★★★★
InFocus ScreenPlay 5700	£2,000	DLP	16:9	1024x576	✗	1400:1	1000	✓	✗	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	4.3	291	★★★★
InFocus ScreenPlay 7205	£3,500	DLP	16:9	1280x720	✓	2200:1	1100	✓	✗	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	4.3	296	★★★★
JVC DLA-HX2	£6,339	D-ILA	16:9	1400x788	✓	1,500:1	n/a	✓	✗	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	5.9	301	★★★★
JVC DLA-SX21E	£3,950	D-ILA	16:9	1400x1050	✗	800:1	1500	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	5.9	n/a	
Marantz VP12S4	£9,000	DLP	16:9	1280x720	✓	4500:1	1000	✓	✗	✓/✗	✓	✓	✓	13	301	★★★★★
Marantz VP10S1	£TBA	DLP	16:9	1280x720	✓	3600:1	1200	✓	✗	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	41	n/a	
Mitsubishi EX100U	£1,095	DLP	4:3	1024x768	✗	2000:1	2000	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✓	✓	2.9	300	★★★★
Mitsubishi HC3	£1,269	LCD	16:9	960x540	✗	500:1	1300	✓	✗	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	2.7	Jun-04	★★★★
NEC HT1100	£4,000	DLP	4:3	1024x768	✓	2000:1	880	✓	✗	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	3.2	Jun-04	★★★★
Optoma H27	£700	DLP	16:9	854x480	✗	2000:1	850	✓	✗	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	2.5	298	★★★★
Optoma H30A	£1,095	DLP	16:9	854x480	✓	3000:1	850	✓	✓	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	2.2	292	★★★★★
Optoma H57	£1,900	DLP	16:9	1024x576	✓	3500:1	900	✓	✓	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	3.4	n/a	
Optoma H77	£3,995	DLP	16:9	1280x720	✓	3500:1	900	✓	✗	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	7.5	n/a	
Optoma MovieTime DV10	£849	DLP	16:9	854x480	✗	4000:1	1000	✓	✓ (via adaptor)	✗/✗	✓ (via adaptor)	✓	✓	3.5	300	★★★★
Panasonic PT-AE500	£1,850	LCD	16:9	1,280x720	✓	1,300:1	850	✓	✓	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	2.9	Apr-04	★★★★★
Panasonic PT-AE700	£1,700	LCD	16:9	1,280x720	✓	2,000:1	1,000	✓	✓	✓/✗	✓	✗	✓	3.7	290	★★★★★
Philips Astaire LC6281	£899	LCD	16:9	854x480	✗	400:1	800	✓			✓	✗	✓	3.5	n/a	
Philips Astaire De-Luxe LC6285	£1,199	LCD	16:9	855x480	✗	600:1	1000	✓	✗	✗/✗	✓	✗	✓	3.5	Jun-04	★★★★
Philips Bogart LC7281	£1,449	DLP	4:3	1024x768		1800:1	800	✓			✓		✓	1.6	n/a	
Sagum MDP-1600	£800	DLP	4:3	800x600	✗	1500:1	1,600	✓	✗	✗/✗	✗	✓		1.9	295	★★★★
Sanyo PLV-Z2	£1,295	LCD	16:9	1280x720	✗	1200:1	700	✓	✗	✗/✓	✓	✗	✓	3.9	Mar-04	★★★★★
Sanyo PLV-Z3	£1,300	LCD	16:9	1280x720	✓	2000:1	800	✓	✗	✓/✗	✓	✗	✓	4.1	290	★★★★★
Sharp XV-Z10	£1,100	LCD	16:9	854x480	✗	600:1	1000	✓	✗	✗/✗	✓	✗	✓	2.7	Jul-04	★★★★
Sharp XV-Z201E	£3,300	DLP	16:9	1024x576	✗	2000:1	800	✓	✗	✗/✓	✓	✗	✓	4.6	Oct-04	★★★★
Sharp XV-Z1200	£6,000	DLP	16:9	1280x720	✓	5500:1	900	✓	✗	✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	9.4	290	★★★★
Sim2 Domino	£3,750	DLP	16:9	1024x576		2000:1		✓			✓		✓	5.0	n/a	
Sim2 Domino 18	£2,300	DLP	16:9	1024x576	✓	1800:1		✓			✓		✓	5.0	n/a	
Sim2 Domino 30H	£5,000	DLP	16:9	1280x720	✓	2800:1		✓		✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	5.0	n/a	
Sim2 HT-280	£4,000	DLP	16:9	1280x720	✓	2300:1		✓		✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	5.8	n/a	
Sim2 HT-300 Evolution	£8,000	DLP	16:9	1280x720	✓	3500:1		✓		✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	5.8	n/a	
Sim2 HT-300 E Link	£11,000	DLP	16:9	1280x720	✓	3500:1		✓		✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	5.8	n/a	
Sim2 HT-500 Evolution	£23,000	DLP	16:9	1280x720	✓	3500:1		✓		✗/✓	✓	✓	✓	28	n/a	
Sony VPL-HS10	£2,700	LCD	16:9	1386x788		700:1	1200	✓			✓			5.4	n/a	
Sony VPL-HS20	£2,800	LCD	16:9	1280x853	✓	1300:1	n/a	✓	✗	✓/✓	✓	✗	✓	5.4	May-04	★★★★

RECEIVERS

Projectors Continued...

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	TYPE	PANEL SHAPE	RESOLUTION (PIXELS)	HI-DEF COMPATIBLE	CONTRAST RATIO	BRIGHTNESS (ANSI LUMENS)	S-VIDEO IN	SCART IN	HDMI/DVI IN	COMPONENT VIDEO IN	PC IN	NTSC SUPPORT	WEIGHT Kg	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Sony VPL-VW12HT	£4,700	LCD	16:9	1366x768		1000:1	1000	✓			✓			8.0	n/a	
Toshiba TDP-MT8	£5,995	DLP	16:9	1280x720		1400:1	1000	✓			✓		✓	4	Mar-03	★★★★★
Toshiba TDP-MT200	£1,000	DLP	16:9	854x480	✗	2,500:1	750	✓	✗	✓/✗	✓	✗	✓	2.9	Jan-05	★★★★★
Toshiba TDP-MT700	£2,500	DLP	16:9	1280x720	✓	2,500:1	1000	✓	✗	✓/✗	✓	✓	✓	5.65	296	★★★★★
Toshiba TDP-S25	£770	DLP	4:3	800x600	✗	2,000:1	1800	✓	✗	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	3	298	★★★
Toshiba TLP-ET1	£1,000	LCD	16:9	858x480	✗	600:1	n/a	✓	✓	✗/✗	✓	✓	✓	3.5	Jan-04	★★★★
ViewSonic PJ510	£730	LCD	4:3	800x600	✗	300:1	1200	✓	✗	✗/✗	✓	✗	✓	2.9	May-04	★★
ViewSonic PJ650	£1,400	LCD	4:3	1024x768	✗	350:1	2000	✓	✗	✗/✗	✓	✗	✓	2.7	Jun-04	★★★★
ViewSonic PJ755	£1,370	LCD	4:3	1024x768	✓	2000:1	2700	✓	✗	✗/✓	✓	✗	✓	3.4	298	★★★★
Yamaha LPX-510	£3,500	LCD	16:9	1280x720	✓	1200:1	1000	✓	✗	✓/✗	✓	✗	✓	6.2	Feb-05	★★★★
Yamaha DPX-1110	£8,000	DLP	16:9	1280x720	✓	4000:1	1000	✓	✗	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	13.8	n/a	

Surround Sound Receivers

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	DOLBY DIGITAL	DPL II	DTS	DTS NEO:6	DOLBY PRO-LOGIC	6.1 CHANNELS	7.1 CHANNELS	THX CERT	FRONT AMP (W)	CENTRE AMP (W)	REAR AMP (W)	VIDEO INPUTS	S-VIDEO COMPATIBILITY	AUDIO INPUTS	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Arcam DiVA AVR250	£1,000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	2x75	1x75	2x75		✓			
Arcam DiVA AVR300	£1,300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	2x100	1x100	2x100		✓			
Cambridge Azur 540r	£250	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	2 x 80	1x 80	2 x 80	6	✓	11	Jul-04	★★★★★
Denon AVR-1604	£300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	2x75	1x75	2x75	5	✓	8	Apr-04	★★★
Denon AVR-1705	£250	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	2x110	1x110	2x110	5	✗	8	Jan-05	★★★★
Denon AVR-1804	£400	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	2x90	1x90	2x90	7	✓	8	Jan-04	★★★★
Denon AVR-2805	£700	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	2x100	1x100	4x100	14	✓	10	Nov-04	★★★★★
Denon AVR-3805	£1,000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	2x120	1x120	4x120	3	✓	3	Aug-04	★★★★★
Harman Kardon AVR 330	£600	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	2x55	1x55	4x55	5	✓	9	Sep-04	★★★★
Harman Kardon AVR 630	£1000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	2x75	1x75	3x75	7	✓	5	Oct-04	★★★★
Harman Kardon AVR 2550	£425	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	2x40	1x40	2x40	3	✓	5	n/a	
Harman Kardon AVR 3550	£525	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	2x60	1x60	2x60	3	✓	6	n/a	
Harman Kardon AVR 4550	£800	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	2x50	1x50	2x50	5	✓	8	n/a	
Harman Kardon AVR 5550	£900	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	2x70	1x70	4x70	5	✓	8	n/a	
Jamo AVR-793	£500	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	2x135	1x135	4x135	9	✓	13	294	★★★★★
JVC RX-DP20	£TBA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2x130	1x130	4x130	5	✓	10	n/a	
JVC RX-8032V	£400	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	2x100	1x100	2x100	5	✓	9	n/a	
Marantz SR4300	£350	✓		✓			✓	✗		2x80	1x80	2x80	4			n/a	
Marantz SR5400	£450	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	2x90	1x90	4x90	8	✓	8	Jul-04	★★★★★
Marantz SR8300	£1,500	✓		✓			✓			2x130	1x130	2x130	6			n/a	
Marantz SR6300	£550	✓		✓			✓		✗	2x60	1x60	2x60	5			n/a	
Marantz SR9200	£2,000	✓		✓			✓			2x160	1x160	2x160	6			n/a	
Onkyo TX-SR602E	£450	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2x120	1x120	2x120	13	✓	13	293	★★★★★
Onkyo TX-SR701E	£700	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	2x130	1x130	2x130	7	✓	9	Feb-04	★★★★★
Onkyo TX-NR801E	£1,000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2x135	1x135	4x135	7	✓	12	May-04	★★★★★
Onkyo TX-NR900E	£1,500	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	2x110	1x110	4x110	8	✓	10	Jan-04	★★★★
Panasonic SA-XR15	£230	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	2x40	1x40	2x40	3	✗	4	n/a	
Panasonic SA-XR45	£380	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	2x100	1x100	2x100	3	✓	5	n/a	
Panasonic SA-HE75	£200	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	2x100	1x100	2x100	3	✗	5	n/a	
Pioneer VSA-AX5i	£1,300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	2x100	1x100	4x100	7	✓	4	Jan-04	★★★★★
Pioneer VSX-C501	£400	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	2x100	1x100	2x100	4	✗	4	Jul-04	★★★★
Pioneer VSX-D814	£250	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	2x100	1x100	2x100	6	✓	8	Nov-04	★★★★★
Sony STR-DB790	£300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	2x100	1x100	2x100	9	✓	8	Jul-04	★★★★
Sony STR-DB900	£300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	2x100	1x100	2x100	3	✗	7	291	★★★★
Yamaha HTR-5640RDS	£300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	2x65	1x65	3x65	6	✗	4	n/a	
Yamaha RX-SL100RDS	£460	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	2x70	1x70	2x70	2	✗	4	Jul-04	★★★★
Yamaha RX-V340RDS	£200	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	2x60	1x60	2x60	4	✗	4	n/a	
Yamaha RX-V440RDS	£300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	2x65	1x65	3x65	6	✗	4	n/a	
Yamaha RX-V450	£300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	2x85	1x85	3x85	7	✗	10	Aug-04	★★★★
Yamaha RX-V650RDS	£460	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	2x95	1x95	3x95	8	✓	14	Sep-04	★★★★★
Yamaha RX-V740RDS	£580	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	2x90	1x90	3x90	7	✓	8	n/a	
Yamaha RX-V2400RDS	£1,000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2x120	1x120	4x120	10	✓	19	Apr-04	★★★★★

SPEAKERS

Home Cinema Speaker Packages

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	SYSTEM	COMMENTS	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Acoustic Energy	£500	2 x floorstanders + 2 x sats + 1 x centre + 1 x subwoofer	An excellent soundsystem: just add a DVD player	290	★★★★★
Blueroom Cinepod	£1,300	2 x floorstanders + 2 x sats + 1 x centre + 1 x subwoofer	Bizarre styling but good sound if low on bass	Feb-04	★★★★
Eclipse TD LULET	£1,300	5 x Lulet 307 sats + 316SW subwoofer	'Fastest' sound in town from funny-looking fellas	Feb-04	★★★★
Elac Cinema XL Set II	£500	4 x sats + 1 x centre + 1 subwoofer	Extremely good value with plenty of power and a well integrated sub	Sep-04	★★★★★
Elac Cinema One ESP II	£400	4 x sats + 1 x centre + 1 x subwoofer	A serious option for those looking for a top quality sub/sat system	May-04	★★★★
Elac CINEMA F20	£950	4 CINEMA F20s + 1 x CINEMA XL CENTRE + 2 x CINEMA 2	Well-built and good looking but lacking bass from sub	Feb-04	★★★★
Focal.JMlab Chorus S	£1,156	2 x CHORUS 714S + CC70S Centre + 2 x 705S	Good all-round performance from small room specialist	Feb-04	★★★★
Focal.JMlab Chorus S	£1,130	4 x 706S Sats + 1 x CC700S Centre + SW700S Powered Sub	Great system, with balance, build and class	Jul-04	★★★★★
Infinity TSS-750	£500	4 x sats + 1 x centre + 1 x subwoofer	Refined and detailed system, but struggles in large rooms	Jul-04	★★★★
Jamo D400	£1,600	4 x D400 + 1 x D4CEN + D4 SUB	Slender design and clean expansive sound	Feb-04	★★★★★
Jamo E700	£800	4 x E700 + 1 x E7CEN + E7 SUB	This system belies its size emphatically	Dec-04	★★★★★
KEF Q Series	£950	2 x floorstanders + 2 x sats + 1 x centre + 1 x subwoofer	Unusual and impressive system with a striking design	Jul-04	★★★★★
KEF KHT1005	£500	4 x Uni-Q satellites + 1 x Uni-Q centre + 1 x PS1000.2 sub	Attractive, solid design has edge on performance	Feb-04	★★★★
Miller & Kriesel K-15	£1,600	3 x K15s + 2 x K4s rears + K-9 subwoofer	Pricey but attractive and competent	Feb-04	★★★★★
Mission m30	£480	4 x m30 Sats + 1 x m3c1 Centre + 1 x ms8 Powered Sub	Untidy but enjoyable, with a grown up performance	Jul-04	★★★★
Monitor Audio Baby AV System	£600	4 sats + 1 centre + 1 sub	–	N/A	
Monitor Audio Bronze AV1 package	£750	4 sats + 1 centre + 1 sub	–	N/A	
Mordaunt Short Avant	£1,150	2 x floorstanders + 1 x centre + 2 x sats + powered sub	An elegant system, flawed slightly by its subwoofer	Jul-04	★★★★
Mordaunt Short Genie	£800	4 x satellites + 1 x centre + sub	Well specified, elegant and remarkable value	Jan-05	★★★★★
Mordaunt Short Premiere Plus	£550	4 x MS-302 satellites + 1 x MS-304 + MS309W sub	Tidy and spacious sounding	Feb-04	★★★★
Pioneer S-V59	£280	4 sats + 1 centre + 110W active sub	–	N/A	
Pioneer S-V59T	£300	2 floorstanders + 1 centre + 2 rear sats	–	N/A	
Quadral Surround 1260	£400	4 sats + 1 centre + 1 active sub	–	N/A	
Quadral Asent	£1,600	2 fronts + 2 rears + 1 centre + 1 active sub	–	N/A	
Quadral Chromium TT	£3,000	4 floorstanders + 1 centre + 1 active sub	–	N/A	
Scandyna Micro-Pods	£500	5 sats + 1 active sub	Attractive and effective, but don't expect quality music performance	Aug-04	★★★★
Sony DPL-VE150MK2	£TBA	– (Dolby Pro-Logic package)	N/A		
Sony HT-SL65	£800	4 sats + 1x centre + sub + surround receiver	Gorgeous looks and build and refined sound, but lacks muscle	May-04	★★★★
Tannoy Fusion 4	£1,000	2 x floorstanders + 1 x centre + 2 x sats + powered sub	Good value system, with much to enjoy	Jul-04	★★★★
Yamaha NS-P610	£500	2 fronts, 1 centre, 2 rear + sub	–	N/A	
Yamaha NS-P220	£200	2 fronts, 1 centre, 2 rear + sub	–	N/A	

Buying Tips: Home Cinema Speakers

There are so many speakers available that we only concentrate on listing those systems that we have reviewed. Sub/sat systems that comprise five identical satellite speakers and a subwoofer are very popular at the sub-£1,000 end of the market. Enthusiasts prefer to opt for a tailor-made system comprising, say, a dedicated centre speaker, floorstanding left and right fronts, bookshelf rears and a separate active (powered) subwoofer. Most manufacturers make speakers in different configurations and the permutations are numerous. This makes it easy to tailor a system to individual requirements and any specialist audio dealer will be happy to advise. It's essential that all of the speakers are tonally matched and appropriate for the power rating of the amplifier. Again, speak to a specialist dealer.

ACCESSORIES

Freeview Receivers

MODEL	GUIDE PRICE	No. OF SCARTS	RGB OUT	S-VIDEO OUT	COMPOSITE VIDEO OUT	OPTICAL DIGITAL OUT	ELECTRICAL DIGITAL OUT	DIGITAL TEXT	7-DAY EPG	FAVOURITES LIST	RF MODULATOR	PAY TV COMPATIBLE	TIMER	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Bush DFTA1	£70	2	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	295	★★★
Bush iDaptor	£50	0	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	301	★★★
Chili Terra TX1200	£50	2	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	301	★★★
Digifusion FRT100	£80	2	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	May-04	★★★★
Digifusion FRT101	£80	2	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	295	★★★★
Echostar T-101FTA	£90	2	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	May-04	★★★★
Humax F2-FOXT	£85	2	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	n/a	
Humax PVR-8000T	£170	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	Jan 05	★★★★
Inverto IDL 3000-T	£55	2	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	295	★★★★
Mitsubishi DTBR-5678	£149	1	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	n/a	
Netgem iPlayer+	£90	1	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	298	★★★★★
Panasonic TU-CT30	£100	2	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	May-04	★★★★★
Pioneer DBR-TF100GB	£99	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	n/a	
Sagem ITD64	£60	2	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	n/a	
Sagem ITD66	£80	2	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	Jan 05	★★★★
Tatung TFR100G	£70	2	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	n/a	
Thomson DTI-500	£70	2	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	n/a	
Thomson DTI-2300	£80	1	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Dec-04	★★★★★
Thomson DTI-2305	£90	2	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/a	

Accessories (Tested Products)

COMPANY	PRODUCT	TYPE	PRICE	FEATURES	ISSUE	RATING (1-5)
Archos	PMA400	Personal media player	£550	Pictures, music and Linux-based PDA chops with a 30GB hard drive	298	★★★★
Archos	AV700	Personal video player	£450	100GB storage with 7in screen, DiVX support, plus good I/Os & remote	297	★★★★★
Samsung	YH-999	Personal video player	£400	A stylish, 20GB model with 3.5in screen, but no DiVX	294	★★★★
Goodmans	GPDR40	Personal video player	£270	Plenty of features and 40GB capacity, but lacklustre 3.6in screen	294	★★★
Actron	AE-DVP100	Personal video player	£230	Rather small and a few software glitches, but decent display	294	★★★
DVX	DVX-Pod	Personal video player	£400	Widescreen 7incher with 40GB, but recording flaws take the shine off	294	★★★★
Creative	Zen	Personal video player	£400	Terrifically usable, great sound and long battery life, but no DiVX	294	★★★★
Cinemateq	DVI-Link OC	Digital video cable	£750	Massively expensive, but absolutely peerless performance	294	★★★★★
Gigatain	DVD-R	4.7GB blank disc	£6 for 25	Reliable, high-quality discs for the right money	294	★★★★★
Projecta	SolidStand	Plasma mount	£646	A unique, if slightly industrial approach to screen mounting	294	★★★★
Alphason Designs	AD3/105-PB	LCD TV stand	£350	A practical and elegant stand with toughened black glass	292	★★★★★
Philips SL300i	SL300i	Multimedia network client	£200 f	Wi-Fi-based client to route your PC's AV content around your house	292	★★★★★
Remote Solutions	Universal	Universal remote	£25	Can handle up to six devices and is powered by a wind-up mechanism	292	★★★
tech+link	AV50R	AV control box	£100	A great all-purpose Scart switcher with four RGB inputs	292	★★★★★
Logitech	Harmony 655	Universal remote	£100	Internet-programmed remote with macros and backlight	Jan-05	★★★★★
Traxdata	DVD+R DL	Double-layer DVD	£22.50 for five	High (8.5GB) capacity and slick performance	Jan-05	★★★★★
Vivanco	Pro Wire	Scart cable	£25	A solid and reliable lead at a great price	Jan-05	★★★★★
Sennheiser	HD555	Headphones	£100	Open design, 120Ω impedence, 3m cable length, 15-28,000Hz frequency response	Dec-04	★★★★★
DigiFusion	FRT101	Freeview receiver	£80	Pause footage and rewind footage in 10 second intervals up to 30 seconds	Nov-04	★★★★
Olson	Sound Fantastic HF 8	Multiplug	£99	This eight-socket multiplug is sturdy, convenient and highly effective	Nov-04	★★★★★
Traxdata	DVD+R disc	Blank DVDs	£9.50 for 10	Offers reliability, durability and excellent image stability	Nov-04	★★★★★
Archos	AV400	AV jukebox	£400	The closest thing to a video iPod, this recording and playback device is portable perfection	Oct-04	★★★★★
One for All	SV1610	Scart switcher	£70	Four inputs, one output and decent performance, but rather limited	Oct-04	★★★★
JS Technology	Master Scart Controller	Scart switcher	£49	A two-input switchbox with good performance; more sockets would be handy, though	Jun-04	★★★★★
Bluedelta	Smart-Scart	Scart switcher	£35	Four inputs, but not compatible with all equipment	Jun-04	★★★
True Colours Industries	Vipersix	DVD/SACD interconnect	£180/1m	A high-end cable with space saving benefits, but very pricey	Jun-04	★★★★★
Thomson	Lyra PDP2860U	Portable AV jukebox	£500	Expensive, but a top-notch entertainment centre to take on your travels	Jun-04	★★★★
Alphason Designs	Aragon AG54/2C	AV furniture	£199	Stylish LCD stand/AV rack that can be wall-mounted or floorstanding	Jun-04	★★★★★
Atlas	Element	Component video cable	£60/m	A high-spec video cable for those seeking style as well as substance	May-04	★★★★★
DVD International	DVE	Calibration disc	£18	An exhaustive, user-friendly tool that leaves no set-up stone unturned	May-04	★★★★★

Test Archives

REPRINTS

Simply list the report(s) you require and send a cheque (payable to Future Publishing Limited) for £3.50 (£4.50 overseas) per review to the address in the coupon. Please include an SAE and allow up to 28 days for delivery

Analogue CRT TVs

Product	Test Date	Rating
Bush		
RF 7682	Sep 03	3
Goodmans		
GTV69W1DT	Aug 03	4
K28W05	Apr 04	5
Hitachi		
C2844S	Oct 04	3
JVC		
HV-32D25EJW	May 03	3
AV-28X37HKE	Aug 03	4
HV-32P37SJE	Jan 04	4
AV-32X37HKE	Feb 04	4
AV-28GT1SJF	Apr 04	3
AV-28X4SKA	Aug 04	5
AV-28R57	Issue 298	3
LG		
Lafinion 82W	Aug 04	4
Loewe		
Articos	Apr 03	5
Mimo 32	Aug 03	5
Nemos 32	Feb 04	5
Aconda 9381/DR+	Aug 04	4
Panasonic		
TX-36PD30	Nov 03	4
TX-32PS12	Dec 03	4
TX-36PL32	Jun 04	5
TX-28PM1	Oct 04	4
TX-28DTM1	Issue 297	4
TX-32PM2	Issue 299	2
Philips		
24PW6817	Jun 03	5
32PW9308	Sep 03	5
32PW9618	Nov 03	5
32PW9768/05	Mar 04	5
28PW8608	Apr 04	5
32PW6517	Apr 04	5
32PW9509	Sep 04	5
32PW9309	Issue 291	5
Samsung		
WS-23M064	Oct 04	4
Sanyo		
CE28FWN4	Dec 03	3
CE-28DFN2	Feb 04	3
Sharp		
28JW-73H	Aug 03	4
28LF-92H	Jul 04	3
Sony		
KV-36FS76U	Mar 03	5
KV-32FQ70U	Aug 03	4
KV-32FX68U	Sep 03	5
KV-28LS36U	Apr 04	4
KV-36HQ100B	Jun 04	5
KV-28CS70U	Issue 291	4
Thomson		
32WF401G TV	Jan 03	4
32WD611S	Feb 03	5
28WF201G	Aug 03	5
28WH203S	Sep 03	5
32WH403	Nov 03	4
32WB643	Dec 03	5
32WB843	Apr 04	4
32WM403	Nov 04	4
32WM101	Issue 297	4
Toshiba		
36ZP38B	May 03	5
36ZP48P	Oct 04	5
28Z47	Nov 04	4
32ZH46	Dec 04	4
28Z44	Issue 293	4

CRT IDTVs

Product	Test Date	Rating
JVC		
AV-32R47SK	Jul 04	4
HV-32D40BK	Issue 296	4
AV-32EX5BK	Issue 299	4
AV-32R57SK	Issue 299	4
LG		
DI-28FZ11	Apr 03	3
Panasonic		
TX-32DT40	Mar 04	5
TX-28DTX10	Sep 04	4
TX-28DTX1	Jan 05	4
TX-32DTM1	Issue 299	4
Philips		
32DW6558/05	Jul 04	4
28DW6559	Issue 293	5
28PW8719	Issue 296	4
Samsung		
WS-32A116DSX	Sep 04	3
WS-32Z306VB	Issue 299	3
Sony		
KD-32DX150	Sep 03	4
KD-28DL10U	Jan 04	5
KD-32DX50U	Mar 04	4
KD-32DX200U	May 04	5
KD-28DL11U	Jan 05	4
KD-32DC11U	Issue 299	4
KD-28DX51U	Issue 301	4
Toshiba		
50WT29	Apr 03	4
32YT56B	Issue 299	5

Rear-Projection TVs

Product	Test Date	Rating
Bush		
RP40TV	Jan 05	3
Loewe		
Articos 55	Apr 04	5
Panasonic		
TX-42PT12	Feb 03	4
Sagem		
Axium	Jun 04	5
Axium HD-D45	Issue 294	5
HD-D45S	issue 298	5
HD-D56B	Issue 299	5
Samsung		
SP50L7HX	Jan 05	5
Sony		
KF-42SX300U	Jun 04	4
KP-44PX3U	Oct 04	4
Thomson		
61TW611	Jul 03	4
40KW611S	Oct 03	4
50DLY645	Jan 05	4
61DSZ644	Issue 291	3
50DSZ645	Issue 294	5
Toshiba		
42WH46	Jan 05	4
46WM48P	Issue 290	5

LCD TVs

Product	Test Date	Rating
Akai		
LM-H30CJSA	Issue 295	5
AOC		
TV20542E	Issue 295	4
Bush		
LCD15TV	Sep 04	3
LCD15IDTV	Jan 05	4
LCD14DVD	Issue 290	4
DMTech		
DML-3117WD	Oct 04	4
DML-4120SD	Issue 295	3
DML-4126WD	Issue 296	4
DML-4132WLD	Issue 300	3
DML-413WDT	Issue 301	3
Goodmans		
LD1501	Oct 04	4
LD2601	Issue 292	3
LD1701	Issue 297	4
Hitachi		
28LD5200E	Oct 04	4
32LD7200	Issue 296	5
26LD6200	Issue 297	5
Humax		
LB-17E	Jul 04	4
LGB-32TPVR	Issue 294	4
LGB-26DTT	Issue 295	3
JVC		
LT-32C31BJE	Aug 04	4
LT-17E31	Sep 04	3
LT-C50BJ	Issue 291	4
LT-23D50BK	Issue 298	4
LT-26D50BJ	Issue 292	4
LT-32DS6	Issue 297	5
LT-20B60SJ	Issue 300	3
LG		
RZ-30LZ13	Jun 04	4
KZ-17LZ21	Jun 04	4
RZ-23LZ20	Sep 04	3
RZ-32LZ50	Issue 292	3
RZ-20LA70	Issue 295	4
RZ-15LA66	Issue 299	3
RZ-32LP1	Issue 301	4
Loewe		
Mimo 15	Mar 04	4
Xelos SL20	May 04	4
Xelos SL32 HD/DR+	May 04	4
Spheros R37	Issue 294	5
Concept L32	Issue 299	4
Xelos A26	Issue 300	4
Panasonic		
TX-20LA1	Mar 04	4
TX-17LA1	May 04	4
TX-32LXD1	Sep 04	4
TX-32LXD500	Issue 296	5
TX-32LXD50	Issue 299	3
Philips		
32PF9986	Sep 04	5
37PF9986	Oct 04	5
30PF9946	Dec 04	4
26PF9946	Issue 290	4
42PF9986	Issue 291	5
20PF8846	Issue 295	4
26PF8946	Issue 296	5
26PF5520D	Issue 298	4
15PF8946	Issue 297	4
32PF7520D	Issue 300	4
32PF9830	Issue 301	4
Roadster		
CTV1042D	Issue 301	4
Relisys		
RLT4000	Issue 300	4
Sagem		
HD-L27	Issue 293	4
Samsung		
LW40A23W	Sep 04	4
LW15M13C	Sep 04	4
LE32R41BD	Issue 298	5
LW32A33W	Issue 292	4
LE32A41B	Issue 295	4
LE15E31S	Issue 296	4
LE-20S51B	Issue 300	4
Sanyo		
CE30LD3	Oct 04	3
CE27LC3	Issue 292	3
CE17LC4W-B	Issue 299	3
Sharp		
LC-15S1E	Sep 04	5
LL-171ME	Oct 04	4
LC-32GD1E	Nov 04	4
LC-45GD1E	Issue 293	4
LC-20SH1E	Issue 295	3
LC-32P50E	Issue 300	4
Sky		
SLCD1701	Issue 291	3
Sony		
KLV-26HG2	Aug 04	5
KDL-L32MRX1	Sep 04	5
KLV-L32M1	Issue 290	5
KLV-27HR3	Issue 294	4
KLV-L23M1	Issue 296	5
KDL-V32A12U	Issue 300	5
Tatung		
TLT2601	Aug 04	4
Techview		
TSL-15T	Jul 04	3
Thomson		
27LCDB03B	Jun 04	5
30LCDB03BK	Oct 04	4
32LB220B4U	Issue 295	5
Toshiba		
26WL46B	Sep 04	5
17WL46B	Sep 04	4
32WL48	Feb 05	5
27WL56P	Issue 297	4
32WL56P	Issue 300	5
32WLT58	Issue 301	5
ViewSonic		
N3000W	Nov 04	5
N2010	Issue 291	4
N3200W	Issue 293	4
N2750W	Issue 297	4

Plasma TVs

Product	Test Date	Rating
BenQ		
PDP46W1	Apr 04	3
Fujitsu		
P42HHS30ES	Jun 04	5
P42VHA30ES	Sep 04	5
P63XHA30E	Nov 04	4
P42HHA40	Issue 296	4
Goodmans		
GTV42P2	Dec 04	2
HiSense		
PDP4211EU	Issue 292	3
Hitachi		
42PD5200	Jun 04	5
32PD5300	Aug 04	5
55PMA550	Nov 04	5
42PD7200	Issue 294	5
42PD7500	Issue 299	5
Hyundai		
HPT-4240	Jun 04	3
JVC		
PD-42V31E	Jun 04	3
PD-42B50	Dec 04	4
LG		
MZ-42PZ44	Jul 04	3
RZ-42PX11	Dec 04	3
RZ-42PY10X	Issue 298	4
Loewe		
Xelos A42	Issue 298	3
NEC		
42XM2S	Jul 04	4
61MX2	Nov 04	3
Panasonic		
TH-50PHW5	Jul 03	5
PH-42PA20	Nov 03	5
TH-42PW6	Dec 03	5
TH-42PE30B	Aug 04	5
TH-37PV500	Issue 296	5
Philips		
42PF9965	Sep 03	5
42PF9966	Dec 04	4
42PF9946	Issue 292	4
42PF5520D	Issue 301	3
Pioneer		
PDP-434HDE	Jan 04	5
PDP-504HDE	May 04	5
PDP-435XDE	Nov 04	4
PDP-436XDE	Issue 301	5
Relisys		
RP-4202S	Aug 03	3
Samsung		
PS-42P4	Issue 290	4
PS42V4SKX	Issue 298	3
Sony		
KE-42MR1	Jun 03	4
KDE-P42MRX1	Jan 05	4
KE-P42M1	issue 298	3
Thomson		
42WM03ST	May 04	4
37PB220S4	Issue 296	3
Tiny		
Focus 4200	Issue 292	4
Toshiba		
26WL36P	Dec 03	4
42WP46	Issue 291	4
Yamaha		
PDM-4210	Sep 04	4

TV/VCR/DVD Combis

Product	Test Date	Rating
Bush		
BTV183DVD	Oct 03	3
Lodos		
TV/DVD1400	Oct 03	4
Toshiba		
VTW2185	Nov 03	5

DVD/VCR Combis

Product	Test Date	Rating
Hitachi		
DV-PF3E	Dec 03	3
JVC		
HR-XVS20	May 03	5
HR-XVS30	May 04	5
LG		
DV1010	Mar 04	5
Panasonic		
NV-VP31	Jul 04	4
DMR-E75V	Sep 04	5
Samsung		
SV-DVD55	Dec 03	3
Sanyo		
HV-DX2E	Jul 03	4
Sharp		
DV-NC65	Jul 03	4
Sony		
SLV-D950	Aug 04	4
Sony SLV-D930	Issue 296	4
Toshiba		
SD-34VB	Jan 05	5

DVD Players

Product	Test Date	Rating
Alba		
DVD45	Dec 03	3
AMW		
P80L	Feb 04	4
Arcam		
FMJ DV27A	Sep 03	5
DIVA DV78	Apr 04	5
DIVA DV78	Apr 04	5
DV79	Issue 290	5
Bush		
DVD 2026	Nov 03	4
PDVD1000	Dec 03	5
Cambridge Audio		
DVD55	Aug 03	4
540D	Jun 04	5
Chili		
DVD-MX205 USB	Issue 299	3
Cyberhome		
CH-DVD 400	Aug 03	4
CH-LDV710	Dec 03	3
CH-DVD 462	Issue 295	5
Cyrus		
DVD8	Jun 03	4
Denon		
DVD-1400	Dec 03	5
DVD-2200	Mar 04	5
DVD-A11	Apr 04	5
DVD-1710	Sep 04	5
DVD-3910	Issue 290	5
DVD-1910	Issue 294	5
Goodmans		
GDB 400 DVD	Jun 04	3
GDVD161DX	Dec 04	4
Harman Kardon		
DVD30	Oct 03	5
DVD22	Issue 294	5
Hitachi		
DV-P335E	Dec 03	4
JVC		
XV-NP1SL	Dec 03	3
XV-NA77SL	Mar 04	5
XV-N212	Dec 04	4
XV-NP10S	Jan 05	4
XV-N322S	Issue 299	4
Kiss		
DP-500	Sep 03	4
DP-508	Apr 04	4
DP-558	issue 300	4
LG		
DV8900	Issue 290	5
Marantz		
DV4300	Jul 03	5
DV7600	Issue 298	5
Mustek		
DVB-T202	Issue 295	4
NAD		
56	Feb 04	4
T512	Feb 04	4
Onkyo		
DV-SP501	Mar 04	4
DV-SP1000	Issue 290	5
DV-SP502E	Issue 293	5
Panasonic		
DVD-LS5	Dec 03	4
DVD-LX8	Sep 04	5
DVD-S27	Jan 05	4
DVD-S97	Issue 292	5
Philips		
DVP720SA	Sep 04	4
DVP5100	Issue 297	4
DVR9000S	Issue 299	5
PET1000	Issue 300	5
Pioneer		
DV-360	Oct 03	5
DV-565A	Mar 04	5
DV-868AVi	May 04	5
DV-575A	Oct 04	5
DV-470	Dec 04	5
DV-380	Issue 301	4
Roadstar		
DVD3000	Jul 03	3
Roksan		
Caspian	Jun 03	1
Ronin		
M280	Jun 04	4
DVD-215F	Jul 04	4
Samsung		
DVD-P345	Aug 04	5
DVD-L1200	Sep 04	5
DVD-HD945	Issue 292	5
Sanyo		
DVD-SL22	Jun 03	4
Sharp		
DV-SL10H	Sep 03	5
Sony		
DVP-NS930	Sep 03	5
DVP-M50	Jan 04	4
DVP-NS585P	Sep 04	4
DVP-NS30	Issue 299	4
Tag McLaren		
DVD32FLR	Jun 03	5
Thomson		
DTH-311U	Jan 04	4
DTH213	Jul 04	3
Toshiba		
SD-P1400	Sep 04	4
SD-340E	Oct 04	5
SD-150E	Issue 297	4
SD-350E	Issue 300	5
SD-P1600	Issue 301	3

Vieta		
DVD-3	Mar 04	4
Yamada		
PVD-500	Sep 04	3
DVX-6600	Oct 04	4
DVX-6700	Issue 293	4
DVD-6500X	Issue 296	4
PDiX-770	Issue 297	3
DVD-S557	Issue 298	5
Yamaha		
DV-SL100	Jul 04	5
DVD-S1500	Issue 300	5
DVD-S657	Issue 301	4

DVD Systems

Product	Test Date	Rating
Akai		
DR-R5800PST	Issue 297	4
Denon		
DHT-500SD	Oct 04	5
DHT-M330DV	Issue 295	4
DHT-550SD	Issue 297	5
Eltax		
Nova DVD Jamo	May 04	4
DVD-593/AVR-793	Issue 294	5
JVC		
JVC EX-A1	Jul 04	5
TH-SW9	Dec 04	4
TH-SW8	Issue 292	4
TH-S55	Issue 297	4
KEF		
Instant Theatre	May 04	4
Loewe		
Auro/Tremo	Apr 04	3
Marantz		
Hollywood Take 2	Issue 293	4
Mustek		
R320A Plus	Issue 295	2
Panasonic		
SC-HT870	Oct 04	4
SC-PM39D	Nov 04	4
SC-HT37R	Dec 04	5
SC-HT1500	Issue 291	4
Philips		
MX-5800SA	Mar 04	4
MX6000i	Issue 290	4
RCS-9H	Issue 291	4
LX7500R	Issue 292	4
Pioneer		
NS-DV990	Feb 04	5
DCS-323	Sep 04	5
DCS-333	Issue 297	4
Samsung		
HT-EV100	Jan 04	3
HT-DS400	Jul 04	4
Sanyo		
DC-TS780	Sep 04	3
Sharp		
SD-PX15H	Issue 291	3
Sony		
DAV-SC8	Mar 04	4
HT-SL65	May 04	4
DAV-SR4W	Issue 292	4
Tatung		
THT5125S	Mar 04	3
Thomson		
DPL-909VD	Jan 04	3
Toshiba		
SD-63HK	Oct 04	4
SD-44HK	Issue 294	5
Vieta		
VDR-3000/Neo5	Feb 04	5

DVD Recorders

Product	Test Date	Rating
Akai		
ADR-5800Di	Issue 294	4
Bush		
DVRHS01	Oct 04	3
DVHRS02	Issue 296	4
CyberHome		
CH-DVR 750	May 04	4
CH-DVR1600	Issue 297	3
Ellion		
DVR-530S	Issue 291	4
Funai		
DRV-B2737	Issue 299	4
Hitachi		
DV-RX7000	Issue 290	4
Humax		
DRP-560	Aug 04	4
JVC		
DR-MV1	Oct 04	4
DR-MH20	Dec 04	4
DR-M10	Issue 290	4
LG		
DR4810	Jun 04	3
Loewe		
Centros 1102	Issue 290	3
Mustek		
R100B	Jun 04	3
Nissan		
DR-200BB	Issue 291	3
Panasonic		
DMR-E55	Aug 04	5
DMR-E65	Oct 04	5
DMR-ES10	Issue 293	5
DMR-ES30VEB	Issue 295	4
Philips		
DVDR75	Mar 04	4
DVDR615	Issue 293	4
Pioneer		
DVR-3100	Jan 04	4
Samsung		
DVD-R1000E	Issue 292	4
Sanyo		
DVR-V100E	Issue 299	3
Sharp		
DV-RW250H	Issue 295	4
Sony		
RDR-GX700	Dec 04	5
RDR-GXD500	Jan 05	5
Tatung		
TDVR600S	Issue 291	4
Thomson		
DTH 8000U	Feb 04	3
DTH 8005	Aug 04	3
DTH 8040	Issue 290	3
Toshiba		
DR-1	Mar 04	3
Yamada		
DVR-8000	Sep 04	3
DVR-8100	Issue 292	4

HDD/DVD Recorders

Product	Test Date	Rating
Goodmans		
GDVDR305DVBT	Issue 300	3
GHDD177DVDR	Issue 301	3
JVC		
DR-MH30	Nov 04	4
DR-MX1	Issue 291	4
DR-MH50S	Issue 295	4
DR-MH200S	Issue 300	3
Lite-On		
LVW-5045	Issue 291	5
Mustek		
R580	Issue 297	2
Panasonic		
DMR-E85H	Jul 04	5
DMR-E95H	Nov 04	5
DMR-E500H	Nov 04	5
DMR-EH50	Issue 294	5
DMR-EH80V	Issue 299	3
DMR-EH60D	issue 300	5
Philips		
HDRW720	Nov 04	3
DVDR725H	Issue 291	4
Pioneer		
DVR-433H	Issue 298	5
DVR-5100H	Jan 04	4
DVR-720H	Aug 04	5
DVR-520H	Sep 04	5
DVR-420H	Nov 04	5
DVR-920H	Issue 290	5
DVR-630H	Issue 299	5
Sanyo		
DVR-H200	Issue 300	4
Sharp		
DV-HR300H	May 04	4
DV-HR480H	Issue 300	4
Sony		
RDR-HX1000	Jan 05	5
RDR-HX510	Issue 296	5
RDR-HXD910	Issue 299	5
Toshiba		
RD-XS32	Aug 04	4
RD-XS34	Issue 296	5
Yamada		
DVR-9000H	Issue 297	4

Freeview PVRs

Product	Test Date	Rating
Humax		
PVR-8000T	Jan 05	4
Inverto		
IDL-7000T	Issue 295	4
Panasonic		
TU-CTH100	Issue 298	4
Sagem		
PVR6240	Issue 298	3
Thomson		
DHD 4000	Issue 293	5
Topfield		
TF5800	Issue 298	5

VCRs

Product	Test Date	Rating
JVC		
HR-S5965EK	Jun 03	5
LG		
LV810	Mar 03	5
Panasonic		
NV-HS880	Mar 03	5
Sanyo		
VHR-H802E	Mar 03	4
Sharp		
VC-MH835HM	Mar 03	5
Sony		
SLV-SE720	Mar 03	4
Thomson		
VTH-6400	Oct 03	4

Freeview Adaptors

Product	Test Date	Rating
Bush		
DFTA1	Issue 295	3
iDaptor	Issue 301	3
Chilli		
Tera TX1200	Issue 301	3
Daewoo		
SV900	Jul 04	4
Digifusion		
FRT100	May 04	4
FRT101	Nov 04	4
FRT101T	Issue 295	4
Echostar		
T-101FTA	May 04	4
Goodmans		
GDB3	Nov 03	4
Hauppauge		
DEC2000-T	Feb 03	4
Humax		
F2-FOX T	Dec 03	5
Inverto		
IDL-3000T	Issue 295	4
Netgem		
i-Player	Nov 03	5
i-Player+	Issue 298	5
Panasonic		
TU-CT30	May 04	5
Philips		
DTR1500	Nov 03	4
Pioneer		
DBR-TF100	Nov 03	5
Sagem		
ITD64	Jul 04	5
ITD66	Jan 05	4
Thomson		
DTI2300	Dec 04	5

Projectors

Product	Test Date	Rating
BenQ		
PE5120	Issue 298	5
Dreamvision		
Dreamweaver2	Sep 04	5
Epson		
EMP-TW500	Jul 04	4
EMP-TW200	Aug 04	4
Hewlett Packard		
EP7122	Issue 298	4
Hitachi		
PJ-TX100	Oct 04	4
InFocus		
Screenplay 4805	Nov 04	5
Screenplay 5700	Issue 291	4
Screenplay 7205	Issue 296	4
JVC		
DLA-SX21E	Oct 03	5
DLA-HX2	Issue 301	4
Marantz		
VP-12S4	Issue 301	5
Mitsubishi		
HC3	Jun 04	4
EX100U	Issue 300	4
NEC		
HT1100	Jun 04	4
Optoma		
H50	Jan 03	5
H27	Issue 298	4
Movie Time DV10	Issue 300	4
Panasonic		
PT-AE500	Apr 04	5
PT-AE700	Issue 290	5
Philips		
Astaire Deluxe Plus	Jun 04	4
Piano Avanti HE-3200	Oct 03	3
Sagum		
MDP-1600	Issue 295	4
Sanyo		
PVL-Z2	Mar 04	5
PVL-Z3	Issue 290	5
Sharp		
XV-Z10	Jul 04	4
XV-Z201	Oct 04	4
XV-Z12000	Issue 290	4
Sim2		
Domino 20	Oct 03	5
Sony		
VPL-HS20	May 04	4
ThemeScene		
H30	Jun 04	5
H30A	Issue 292	5
Toshiba		
TDP-MT200	Jan 05	5
TDP-MT700	Issue 296	5
TDP-S25	Issue 298	3
ViewSonic		
PJ510	May 04	2
PJ650	Jun 04	4
PJ755D	Issue 298	4
Yamaha		
LPX-510	Issue 290	4

Personal Video Players

Product	Test Date	Rating
Actron		
AE-DVP100	Issue 294	3
Archos		
PMA400	Issue 298	4
AV400	Oct 04	5
AV700	Issue 297	5
Creative		
Zen	Issue 294	4
Designer Vision		
DVX-Pod	Issue 294	4
Goodmans		
GPDR40	Issue 294	3
Samsung		
YH-999	Issue 294	4
Thomson		
PDP2860U	Jun 04	4

AV Amps/Receivers

Product	Test Date	Rating
Cambridge Audio		
Azur 540r	Jul 04	5
Denon		
AVR-2805	Nov 04	5
AVR-3805	Aug 04	5
AVR-1705	Jan 05	4
Harman Kardon		
AVR-330	Sep 04	4
AVR630	Oct 04	4
Infinity		
TSS-750	Jul 04	4
Marantz		
SR5400	Jul 04	5
Mission		
m30	Jul 04	4
NAD		
T753	Oct 04	4
Onkyo		
TX-SR701E	Feb 04	5
TX-NR801E	May 04	5
TX-SR602E	Issue 293	5
Panasonic		
SA-XR30	Oct 04	3
Pioneer		
VSX-D814	Nov 04	5
VSA-AX5i	Jan 04	5
VSX-C501-s	Jul 04	4
Sony		
STR-DB790	Jul 04	4
TA-DA9000ES	Aug 04	4
STR-DB900	Issue 291	4
Yamaha		
RX-SL100RDS	Jul 04	4
RX-V450	Aug 04	4
RX-V650	Sep 04	5
DSP-AX750SE	Oct 04	5

Speakers

Product	Test Date	Rating
Acoustic Energy		
Aegis P511	Issue 290	5
Blueroom		
Cinepod	Feb 04	4
Elac		
Cinema One ESP	May 04	4
Cinema XL Set II	Sep 04	5
Jamo		
E700	Dec 04	5
JMLab		
Chorus S	Jul 04	5
KEF		
Q Series	Jul 04	5
Mordaunt-Short		
Avant	Jul 04	4
Genie	Jan 05	5
REL		
Strata 5	Oct 04	5
Stampede	Dec 04	5
Scandyna		
Micro-pods	Aug 04	4
Tannoy		
Fusion 4	Jul 04	4

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Astra	0345 697750	www.ses-astra.com
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B&W Loudspeakers	01903 221500	www.bwspeakers.com
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Comet	0845 6007002	www.comet.co.uk
Conrexx	02890 303805	www.conrexx.com
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Creative		www.europe.creative.com
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Currys	020 84193000	
Cyberhome	01234 530009	www.cyberhome-europe.de
D		
Daewoo	0118 925 2500	
Denon	01753 888447	www.denon.co.uk
Designer Vision		www.designervision.co.uk
Digifusion	01423 815000	www.fusiondigitec.com
Digital Projection (c/o Owl Video Systems Ltd)	01825 766123	www.owl-video.co.uk
Dixons	01442 353000	www.dixons-group-plc.co.uk
DM Tech	0870 5425425	www.comet.co.uk
Dolby	01793 842100	www.dolby.com
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DTS	0118 9349199	www.dtstech.com
E		
Echostar	0870 0802350	www.echostaruk.co.uk
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Eltax	01908 226464	
Epson	08702 416900	www.epson.co.uk
F		
Focal.JMlab	0121 6165126	www.focal-fr.com
Freeview	08708 809980	
Fujitsu	020 87313450	www.fujitsu-general.co.uk
G		
Gamepath	01908 317707	
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Goodmans Industries	023 92391000	
Grundig	020 8324 9400	www.grundig.co.uk
H		
Harman Kardon	020 8731 4670	www.harman.com
Hauppauge	020 73781997	www.hauppauge.co.uk
Hewlett Packard	0845 270 4222	www.hp-expo.com
HiSense		www.comet.co.uk
Hitachi	01628 643000	www.hitachidigitalmedia.com
Humax	0870 2478800	www.humaxdigital.com
Hyundai	see Comet	
I		
InFocus	020 82132100	www.infocus.com
Infinity	020 87314670	www.innternationalinfinity systems.com
Inverto	01327 354387	www.inverto.tv
Ixos	01844 219 012	www.ixos.co.uk
J		
Jamo	01788 573100	www.jamo.com
JBL	see Harman Kardon	
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K		
KEF	01622 672261	www.kef.com
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L		
Lexicon	see CSE	www.lexicon.com
LG Electronics	0870 6075544	www.lge.co.uk
Linn	0141 3077777	www.linn.co.uk
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M		
M&K	see Gecko	www.mksound.com
Marantz	01753 680868	www.marantz.com
Mirage (c/o API)	01442 233853	www.miragespeakers.com
Mission	01480 423700	www.mission.co.uk
Mitsubishi	01707 276100	www.meuk.mee.com/consumer
Monitor Audio	01268 740580	www.monitoraudio.co.uk
Mordaunt-Short (c/o Marantz)	01753 680868	www.mordaunt-short.com
Mustek	0870 0132017	www.mustek.com
N		
NAD (c/o Lennbrook)	01908 319360	www.nadelectronics.com
Nakamichi	020 76476205	www.nakamichi.com
NEC	020 87523535	www.nec.co.uk
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Nokia	0800 7837663	www.nokia.com
NTL	0800 0524000	www.ntl.com
O		
One For All (Holland)	00 31 534888000	www.oneforall.com
Onkyo	01494 681515	www.onkyo.co.uk
Optoma	01923 691800	www.optomaeurope.com
Owl Video Systems Ltd	01825 766123	www.owl-video.co.uk
P		
Pace	01274 532000	www.pacemicro.com
Panasonic	08705 357357	www.panasonic.co.uk
Philex	01234 263737	www.philex.com
Philips	0906 1010016	www.philips.co.uk
Pioneer	01753 789789	www.pioneer.co.uk
Q		
QED	01483 747474	www.qed.co.uk
Quadraspire	01225 333360	www.quadraspire.co.uk
R		
REL Acoustics	01656 768777	www.rel.net
Relisys	0161 2326000	www.relisys.co.uk
Richer Sounds	020 79402240	www.richersounds.com
Roadstar	020 85945533	www.roadstar.com
Ronin Media Works (AMW)	0870 1280880	www.rmwx.com
S		
Sagem	01784 898158	www.sagem.com/support
Samsung	0870 2420303	www.samsung.co.uk
Sanyo	01923 246363	www.sanyo.co.uk
Scandyna	00870 4603431	www.podspeakers.com
Screenplay (c/o CSE)	01423 359054	www.infocushome.com
Sennheiser	0800 6525002	www.sennheiser.co.uk
Sharp	0800 1385051	www.sharp.co.uk
Sim2	01825 750850	www.sim2.co.uk
Sky digital	0870 2402000	www.skydigital.co.uk
Sony	08705 111999	www.sony.co.uk
T		
Tag McLaren	01480 415600	
Tannoy	01236 420199	www.tannoy.com
Tatung	01952 290111	
TDK	01737 773773	www.tdk.com
TEAC	01923 819630	www.teac.com
Techtronics	01778 562920	www.techtronics.com
Techview	0845 6340228	www.techsan.co.kr
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Thomson	01732 520920	www.thomson-europe.com
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Toshiba	08704 424424	www.toshiba.co.uk
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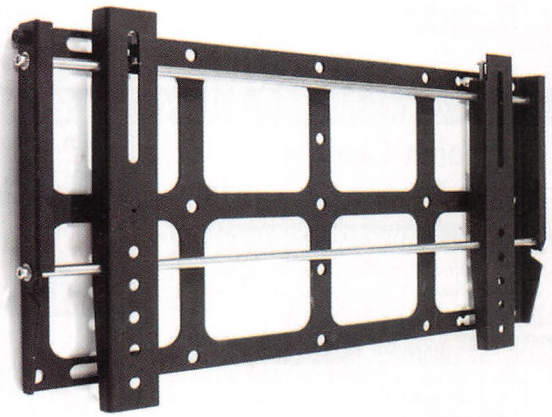

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SIM2 3 CHIP DLP AND HD

Last month I referred to the exciting new Sim2 CSX, which has brought the cost/size/weight of the original 509 model, down to manageable proportions, and hence a more possible solution for more people. Alright it's still only 1280x720 resolution, but 1920x1080 is some time away for DLP, even if it is here in LCD, as in the Fujitsu LPF-D711. But when you see the images produced by the CSX, you have to wonder why we need the higher resolution for normal 6 to 8ft. images, and the Fujitsu is more expensive at £17K, has only half the contrast ratio, and having seen travelogues on it, I suspect is more 'comic' as DLP as films. The only downside of the CSX appears to be the lower bulblife compared to the single chip Sim2 projectors, which was one of their strong selling points, but I suppose that's a minor problem if you can afford the £11 to 15K in the first place. So far we have only seen the more expensive version with the variable iris level, between 200 to 250 watts, which certainly eliminates the main criticism of single chip Sim2 units, that they had gone for contrast over brightness. Now you can have both! Don't forget though, as I keep mentioning, that the JVC HX-1 D-ILA, is also a true 3 chipper for a mere £5.5K, with a resolution of 1400x768, and produces superb HD pictures. Alright, the contrast ratio is not as good as the DLP's, but with the money you're saving you can afford a Stewart Firehawk screen, which will up the contrast, and still be in pocket! Please phone for a demo or chat.

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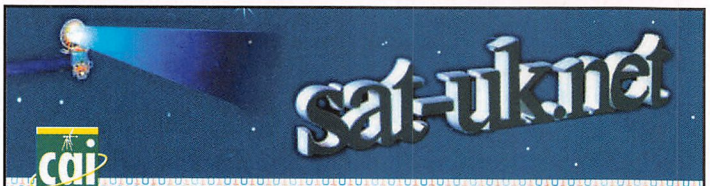

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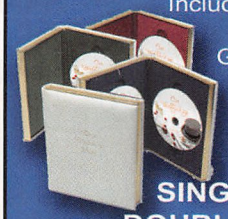

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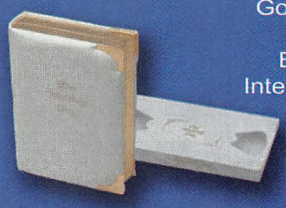

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DVD REVIEW

MOVIE OF THE MONTH

DAVID SMITH REVIEWS THE LATEST HOT DVD RELEASE. THIS MONTH, FOUR SUPER HEROES WHO BOAST THE POWERS OF INVISIBILITY, STRETCHINESS, FIRE AND, ER, BEING MADE OF ROCK...

Disc

FANTASTIC 4
Studio: Fox
Starring: Ioan Grufford, Jessica Alba, Julian McMahon
Release date: 2 December
Price: £24.99 (two-disc); £17.99 (one-disc)

Film buffs will be well aware of the 1994 version of *The Fantastic 4*, produced on an ultra-low budget simply so that the studio involved would not lose the rights for the film and never officially released

This version is, thankfully, rather more polished, and makes for yet another bright and breezy entry into the comic book genre.

Five people are caught up in a deadly cosmic storm while performing experiments in space. Though apparently unharmed, it turns out that the storm altered their DNA, endowing them with superhuman powers.

One becomes stretchy, one becomes invisible, one burns, one turns into a lump of rock and one gradually turns to metal.

These are not the sort of superpowers you would wish for, and not surprisingly the mutated pals try to find a way to reverse the effects of the cosmic radiation.

Well, not all of them... Johnny Storm (Chris Evans) decides that being able to set himself on fire is pretty cool and enjoys his new-found celebrity status as a member of the 'Fantastic Four'.

But didn't I say that five people were caught up in the storm? The fifth (Victor von Doom, played by Julian McMahon) keeps his mutation to himself and decides to use it for his own nefarious ends. You'd think with a name like 'Doom' someone would have suspected...

Fantastic 4 is a very likable romp, thanks to some decent one-liners that pepper the script and strong performances from Evans and Michael Chiklis (Ben Grimm/The Thing). Evans' energy and Chiklis' pathos go a long way to making up for rather limp efforts from Jessica Alba (Sue Storm/The Invisible Girl) and Ioan Grufford (Reed Richards/Mr Fantastic).

The film also suffers (as every superhero movie is doomed to suffer from now on) because *The Incredibles* dealt with so many of the issues in a far more thoughtful manner.

Here, the director is happy to throw away the characterisations and plot in favour of a barnstorming, effects-laden finale. There's no harm in that, and when it is done with this much energy it is great fun, but it doesn't stay with you for long.

The picture is never less than captivating. With actors plastered in makeup and bold colours, the film has a comic book look even during the 'normal' scenes. McMahon in particular looks almost impossibly clean-cut in his first shot – you might wonder if it is actually a computer-generated image.

When the effects come, they are very well handled and make this disc a home cinema showcase. But regular footage is gorgeous as well – the fire engine dangling off the edge of a bridge is a razor sharp scene, with huge levels of detail and bright, vivid colour.

The extras

The one-disc version includes some interesting extras, including an audio commentary by the cast, a featurette on the promotional tour for the film, an 'inside look' at *X-Men 3*, two music videos and a music soundtrack spot.

The two-disc version includes a whole extra platter of goodies, highlighted by a feature-length 'making of' documentary. How interested you are in this will depend on how much you liked the film in the first place, but anyone interested in the process of producing a film like this will want to dip in.

The home of the *Fantastic 4*, the Baxter Building, gets the guided tour treatment, while an 'animatic comparison' looks at how the animated sequences were integrated into the film.

There is a further, much briefer 'making of' piece, deleted scenes, a detailed deconstruction of the special effects used in one scene, a collection of 'audition type' clips from each of the final cast members, a theatrical teaser, a theatrical trailer and several TV spots.

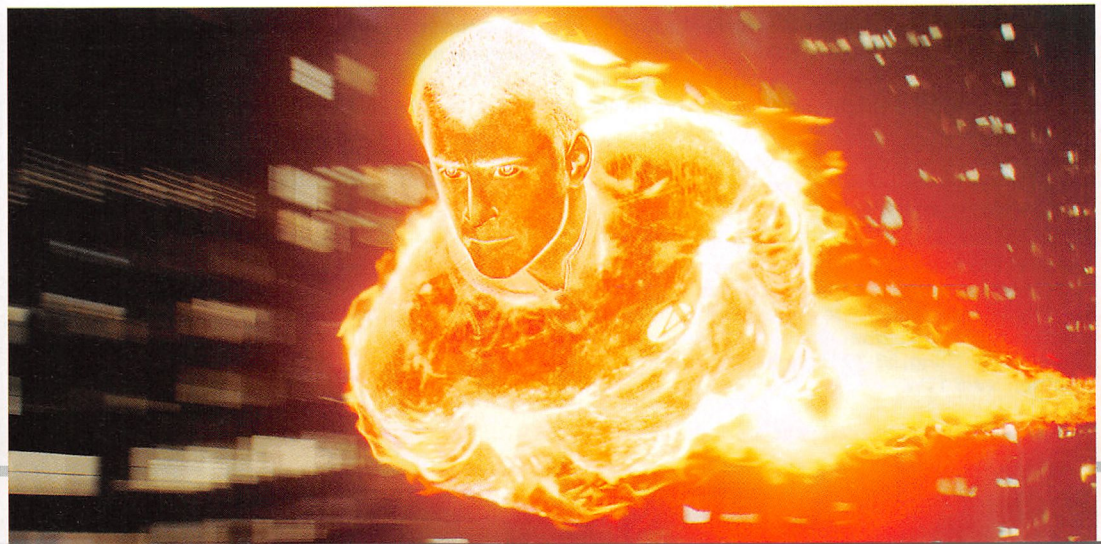
It's a very nice selection of extras, that elevates the two-disc special edition to a collector's item n

Ratings

TOP VIDEO MOMENT
18:34 – A bright red chopper flies over some stunning mountain scenery. It's enough to make you reach for the skiing brochure.

TOP AUDIO MOMENT
1:15:32 – The soundtrack is lively throughout, but it goes into overdrive when The Thing steps into the cosmic storm capsule that is intended to restore him to normal.

Picture	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Extras	★★★★★
Movie	★★★★★



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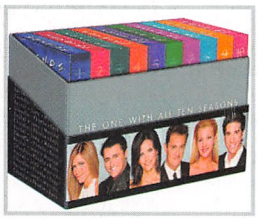
CHARLIE & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory is the perfect showcase for the respective talents of director Tim Burton and Johnny Depp, bringing the weird and wonderful world of eccentric chocolate-maker Willy Wonka, and his Oompa-Loompas, vividly to life. In his search for an heir to his empire, Wonka (Depp) gives away five golden tickets for a tour of his factory – the first in 15 years. Available as a two-disc DVD set with over an hour of special features and interactive games, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is out on 21 November and courtesy of Warner Home Video, we have three copies up for grabs.

FANTASTIC 4

Marvel's first family make their big-screen debut. Struggling scientist Reed Richards secures funding from old friend and rival Victor Von Doom to lead assistant Ben Grimm, ex-girlfriend Sue Storm and her brother Johnny into space looking for vital information about genetic evolution. Following a cosmic storm, their DNA alters, giving them super powers as the *Fantastic 4*. Back on earth, Von Doom – with his new steel skeleton – wants to destroy them... and anyone who gets in his way.

Fantastic 4 will be available in single and two-disc DVD editions from 2 December and the kind folk at Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment have given us three of the two-disc editions – fit to burst with extras – to give away.



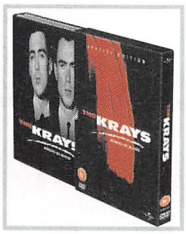
FRIENDS

Grab a coffee and a comfy sofa and prepare to relive the lives, loves and laughs of Chandler, Monica, Ross, Rachel, Phoebe and Joey with these *Friends* DVD sets. *Friends: The One With All Ten Seasons* offers fans the chance to own every episode right from the beginning, so they can watch Ross and Rachel's on-off relationship in its entirety and Joey's progression from wannabe actor to fully-fledged soap star. Or, for a quick fix or to complete your collection, each single season of *Friends* is available in a box set at a special price of £24.99 until the new year.

Available now, Warner Home Video has given us one set of seasons 1-5 on DVD to give away.

THE SKELETON KEY

America's deep south is a region with a history steeped in magic rites and rituals and *The Skeleton Key* combines these themes to produce an atmospheric supernatural thriller starring Kate Hudson. She plays Caroline Ellis, a live-in carer to stroke victim Ben Devereaux in a plantation house in the Louisiana delta. After she is handed the house's skeleton key by Ben's cold-mannered wife Violet, inexplicable events occur and Caroline discovers an attic full of artifacts that suggest the house has a past linked to voodoo and folk magic. Universal Pictures has given us five copies of *The Skeleton Key*, which is out on 28 November, for this month's comp.



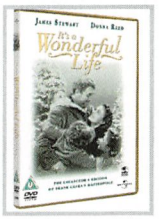
THE KRAYS: SPECIAL EDITION

Some 15 years after its cinematic release, *The Krays* is being released as a special edition double-disc DVD set. Ex-Spandau Ballet stars Martin and Gary Kemp won rave reviews for their portrayal of London's most notorious gangsters, who enjoyed an almost celebrity-like status while ruling the East End with a brand of violence unlike anything seen before. The special edition includes a a documentary with contributions from friends, family and the Kray's enemies, plus an interview with Reggie Kray conducted just 12 days before he died.

The Krays Special Edition is available from 5 December and we have five copies to give away, thanks to our friends at Universal Pictures.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE/HOLIDAY INN

These classic Christmas crackers have become festive favourites. *It's a Wonderful Life* tells the story of how George Bailey (James Stewart) comes to realise the impact he has on his home town. Meanwhile, the all-singing, all-dancing *Holiday Inn* sees Bing Crosby try to mend his broken heart, caused by friend and love rival Fred Astaire, and features the song *White Christmas*.



It's a Wonderful Life has over half an hour of extras, while *Holiday Inn* offers an audio commentary with comments from its leading men. Both are available now and Universal Pictures has been kind enough to donate three copies of each to give away as a special Christmas treat.

How to enter

Answer the following question and send your answer on a postcard – specifying either which disc/s you'd like to win or whether you want to be entered into all comps – to: 'Software Comps', What Video and Widescreen TV, Future Publishing, 53-79 Highgate Road, London NW5 1TW.

What's the name of the coffee house featured in *Friends*?

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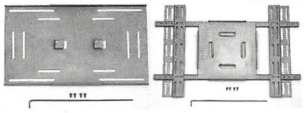
RGB to S-Video convertor

• Converts the RGB scart output of Sky Digital/ITV Digital boxes, and DVD players, into S-video • Ideal for making high resolution connections to AV amps, S-VHS/D-VHS recorders and plasma screens • NTSC and PAL compatible. [RGB2S] £59.99

Flat screen wall mounts

Left: Tilting wall mount for LCD/TFT displays up to 21"/14kg [BT7511] £24.99
Non-tilt version [BT7510] £19.99
Below right: Universal wall mounts (include fitting kits not shown) for plasma screens up to 70kg
[BT8000] for solid walls £79.99
[BT8001] for stud walls £79.99



Sound level meter with digital display

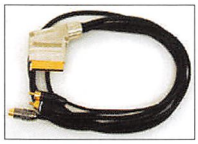
• Phono output for connection to external equipment • 21-bar graphical display
[SLM2055] £39.99

RF THROUGH MODULATORS

Wideband RF Through Modulator
• Display AV signals on a TV • Ideal for use with CCTV security cameras, VCRs without RF output etc • PAL I/G switchable with test signal. [KRFTW] £39.99

RF Through Modulator
• Tunable channels 30–40 [KRFT] £24.99

STERLING CABLES Gold



• High quality AV cables in a wide range of lengths. For example:

S-video plug / S-video plug 3.0m	[SG43]	£15.99
Scart plug / scart plug 0.75m	[SG51]	£12.99
Scart plug / S-VHS plug + 2 phonos switchable IN or OUT of scart 10.0m	[SG85S]	£34.99

HDMI and DVI cables

HDMI to DVI 2.0m	[HDDV2]	£29.99
HDMI to DVI 3.0m	[HDDV3]	£34.99
HDMI to DVI 5.0m	[HDDV5]	£49.99
HDMI to DVI 10.0m	[HDDV10]	£89.99
HDMI to HDMI 2.0m	[HDHD2]	£29.99
HDMI to HDMI 3.0m	[HDHD3]	£34.99
HDMI to HDMI 5.0m	[HDHD5]	£49.99
HDMI to HDMI 10.0m	[HDHD10]	£89.99

Your IR remote can 'see' round corners and into cabinets!

Keene IR Distribution Amplifier

• Receives IR command signals from your remote or the receiver of a wireless system and routes them to where they're needed • There your choice of emitter wand transmits the commands to the equipment • Basic kit supports up to 5 emitters and comprises IR distribution amp, one each low and high power wands, mains power adaptor [IRBKIT] £34.99
Requires receiver: Standard [IRSR] £7.99 Wideband [IRWBR] £12.99
Basic kit as above + standard receiver bundle [IRBKITS] £39.99

NEW Keene IR Commander

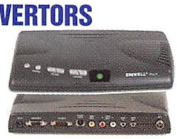
The ultimate solution for controlling equipment by IR remote, even when the equipment is out of sight • Builds on the proven technology of the Keene IR Distribution amplifier to provide a greatly expanded number of inputs and outputs • Optional expansion modules allow up control of equipment up to 50m away • Basic kit comprises Keene IR commander, 240V UK mains adaptor, and high power emitter wand [IRC] £99.99

HSR1000 SCART SWITCHBOX

• Effectively a Home Cinema friendly 7x3 Matrix switcher. • Seven inputs (six scart plus front AV), any of which can be independently routed to one of four outputs • Supports digital audio (SPDIF) on three of the inputs • Now shipping Mk2 version with widescreen support.
[HSR1000] £89.00

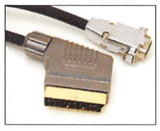
TURN ANY MONITOR INTO A TV...

PROGRESSIVE SCAN TV CONVERTORS



PV200 video switchbox can line double (output to SVGA) and has a built in terrestrial (analogue) TV tuner • Turn your projector, CRT, LCD or Plasma screen into a true multimedia centre. – use the PV200 to connect it to a DVD, VCR, camcorder, games console, satellite receiver or to watch TV • PAL PLUS chipset eliminates motion artefacts and provides sharp-edged smooth moving pictures • Plug and play set up with on-screen menus and automatic channel scan • Supplied complete with IR remote & UK mains adaptor. [PV200] £84.99
[PV500], as PV200 plus Teletext & Nicam [PV500] £129.99
Many more line doublers & scalers available at www.keene.co.uk

SyncBlaster RGB Cables



SyncBlaster cables connect RGB scart equipment directly to projectors, plasma screens and LCD screens • The scart connecting plug of these cables incorporates a fully functional sync separator and amplifier which can draw its power directly from the scart socket (pin 8) so for most applications there's no power supply to worry about either! • Available in a choice of configurations each in four lengths from 1.5m to 10m. Prices from £69.99

DVI 1 to 2 DISTRIBUTION AMPLIFIER

• DVI distribution amplifier • Allows one source to drive two displays • Fully HDCP compliant
[DDD12] £249.00

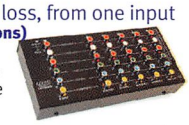
LEADS to GO

Custom AV cables made to your requirements. We can make more or less anything to anything, at any length you want. Easy price calculator in our FREE catalogue and on our web site www.keene.co.uk

DISTRIBUTION AMPLIFIERS

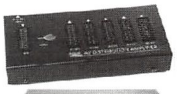
Multiple outputs, without signal loss, from one input

5-Way video + audio (phono connections)



• One input, five fully buffered outputs. • Wide bandwidth HDTV capable. • Use for component, RGBs, s- or 4 x composite video + stereo audio. [KPDA] £99.99

5-Way video + audio (scart)



One in 5 out all via scarts. Fully wired, fully buffered. • Composite, RGB & s-video compatible. [SDA] £89.99

Keene 4-Way with Line Drive

S- or composite video plus stereo audio – 4 identical outputs from one input. • Line drive option [KDA] £69.99

new APTUS convertors

• Video standards convertors designed to be easy to connect and operate

Aptus 1 • RGB to component video convertor • Convert RGBs (set top box RGB with composite sync) into component (Y Pb Pr) video. • Simple scart plug design [APT1] £79.99

NEW Aptus 2

• Converts component video to RGB video. [APT2] £89.99

Scart Commander 4:1 scart switchbox

• High quality AV switcher allows connection of multiple sources to one display, all via scart connections. • Can handle component, composite, s-, and RGB video, even digital audio. • One unit allows four to one switching, or two units in a master/slave arrangement to provide 7:1 switching. • LED indication of selected output. Separate mains adaptor for improved mains isolation. Solid metal case for enhanced screening. [KSC] £149.99
Twin pack (7:1 switching) ..... [KSCT] £249.99

Buy on-line at www.keene.co.uk

Mini wireless spy cameras PRICE CRASH!

Complete kit including colour camera (pictured) and receiver
[KC802A] just £49.00
Other models available, please give us a call or check www.keene.co.uk

Ready made high spec RGB & component video cables

Scart, phono, 15 pin HD and BNC end connector options, full range of lengths. For examples:

Scart/3 BNC plugs 2.0m	[SBB32]	£29.99
3 phono plugs/3 phono plugs 5.0m	[SBB104]	£39.99
15 pin HD male/3 BNC plugs 10.0m	[SBB505]	£44.99

Remote controls

We are main stockists for Marantz and Philips Pronto remotes – call or visit www.keene.co.uk for details.

DOES YOUR VIDEO SYSTEM NEED Long distance? • Component video? Digital audio? • Many rooms?

CAT5BLASTER

Keene Electronics new modular **CAT5BLASTER** system uses clever electronics to send high resolution video and audio over low cost CAT5 network cable.

The **CAT5BLASTER**
• Uses low cost CAT5 network cable (unshielded four twisted pair)
• Has three independent video channels – can be configured for component video, s-video plus composite video, 3 x composite video or RGsB* video
• Can be configured for analogue stereo or digital audio
• Provides IR feedback to the transmitter from every receiver
• Can send stunning quality images up to 300 metres
• Consists of a Transmitter (top right, top) and Master receiver (for 1:1 distribution). Additional Slave receivers may be added as required for multi-room distribution.

*Use an RGB2C or SyncBlaster Black Box to convert set top box RGB to correct format for use with CAT5BLASTER.

CAT5BLASTER: Transmitter module with power supply, master receiver module, standard IR receiver, standard IR emitter wand [C5B] £259.99
CAT5BLASTER slave receiver with power supply [C5BSR] £129.99
CAT5BLASTER master receiver power supply (for extending range to 300m+) [KT5] £5.99
CAT5 network cable [KBL23] 10m+ £0.47/m; 305m reel £80.00

HDMI SWITCHBOX

• HDMI switchbox • Two inputs to one output • Fully HDCP compliant • remote control
[HDS21R] £279.00

DVI 2 to 1 SWITCHBOX

• DVI switchbox • Two inputs to 1 output • Fully HDCP compliant • Remote control
[DS21R] £239.00

DIGITAL AUDIO DELAY MODULE

• Cure lip sync errors • Two inputs with remote control • Optical or coaxial connections • 12 user presets *(Note - for digital audio only)*
[DD540] £139.00

DVI to VGA CONVERTOR

Don't buy a new screen just yet! • Great problem solver for non-HDCP displays • Converts DVI signal to VGA • Fully HDCP compliant • Compact size • Hi-def resolution [DVIFIJX] £225.00

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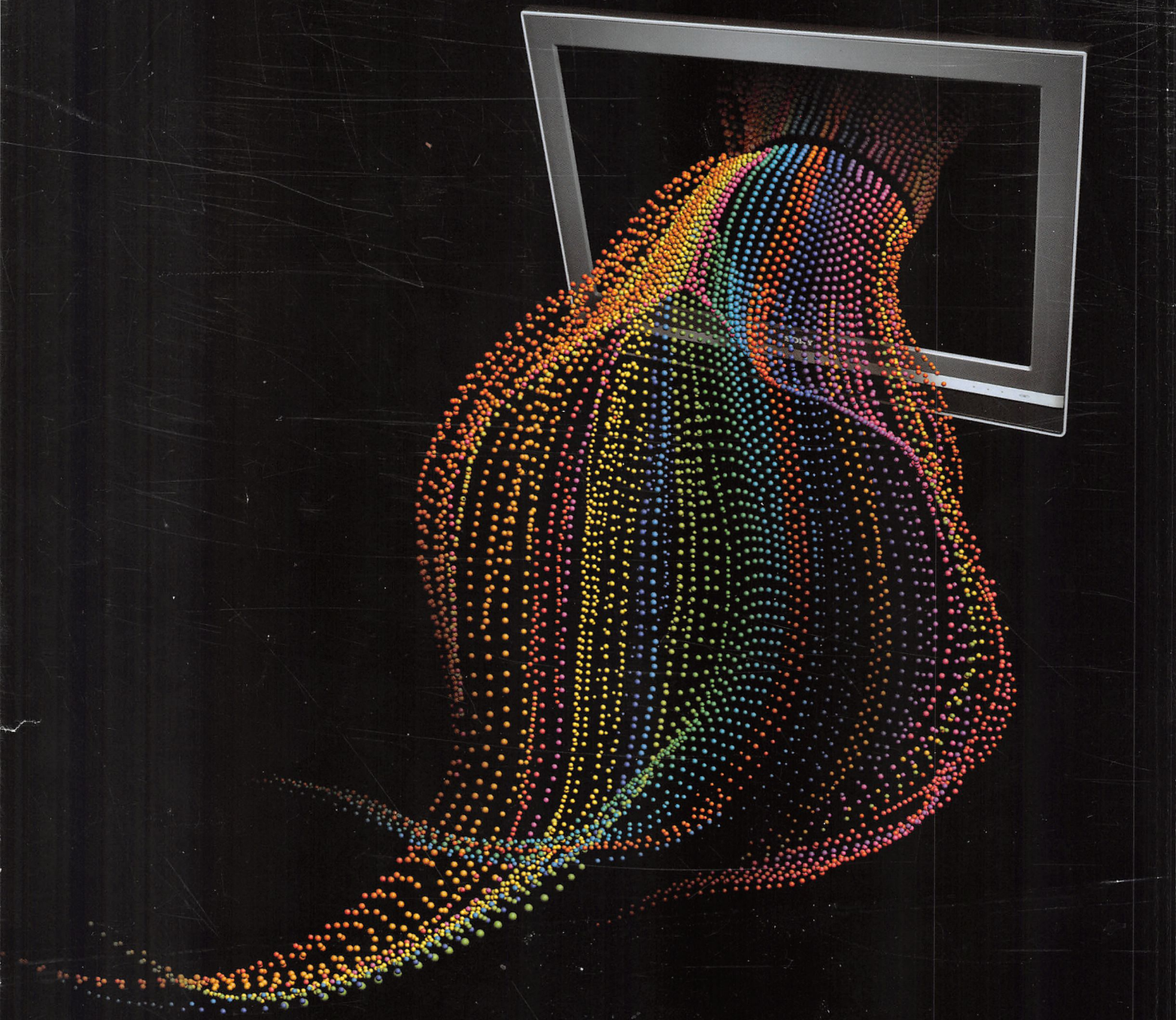

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